



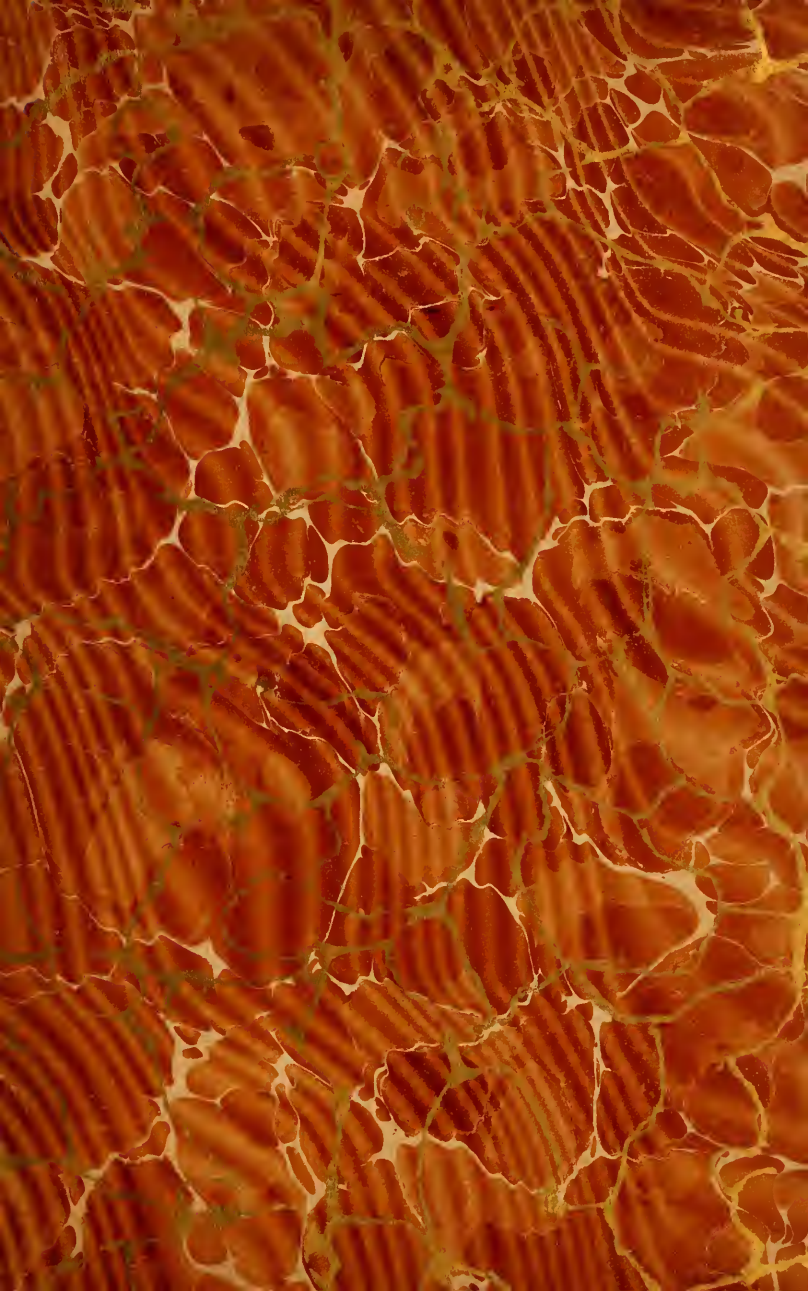


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Ulael Porter Pitts

IN THE

Shadow of the Crag

(A STORY OF THE NORTH)

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

Mabel Porter Pitta

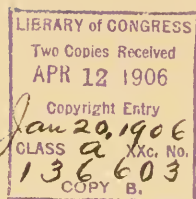


San Francisco;
WALTER N. BRUNT COMPANY
1906

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To one who knows how many
smiles and tears are hid beneath the work.



IN THE SHADOW OF THE CRAG
A STORY OF THE NORTH
AND OTHER POEMS

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IN THE SHADOW OF THE CRAG.

I.

In a village in the Northland where the end-
less wreaths of snow
Smooth the ice-blocks' rugged edges choking
fast the Yukon's flow,

Where the frost in form fantastic traces vines
and flow'rs and leaves
On the dwellings' low-browed windows half
concealed beneath the eaves,

Traces roses pale as ashes, roses cold and
dead and gray
As the blossoms of a passion that the heart
knew yesterday,

Lived a woman blest with beauty fair as blush
of summer's dawn,

Eyes akin to English bluebells that the dew-
drops tremble on,

Hair as tawny as the rush-grass limp be-
neath the sun's embrace,

And each changing, new emotion adding glory
to her face.

Here she lived, her hopes, ambitions all but
turned to sounding brass

By the mock'ry of chimeras darkly shading
fortune's glass

In the days of earnest seeking, when the
thing desired but seemed,

And with stubborn will to follow where the
light of metal gleamed.

Hope will live within the bosom while the
light of life endures,

Men will follow blind, and eager, where the
ignis fatuus lures,

And the suff'rings of such marches, and the
 woes of such stampedes,
And the pictures full with pathos where the
 soul of pity feeds,

And heroic acts of mercy, not forgot though
 left untold,
Prove man's reason, only, bartered, that his
 heart is still unsold.

There is that within our being, give it name
 the one who can,
Shining God-like in man's pity and humanity
 to man,

And the primal good, forgotten through the
 drift of human will,
Stirs the soul, however crippled, to some
 memory of it still.

Rumor comes on north wind blowing, vague,
 and wild, as rumor can,
Of a storied El Dorado rich beyond the ken
 of man.

Like a fever comes the rumor, sweeping bare
the little town,
Leaving naught but empty cabins, cold, be-
neath the winter's frown;

Cabins looming dark and cheerless, with their
windows blank and dead
As the sightless eyes of mortals when the
spark of life is fled;

Doors, left half ajar, are filling with the drift
of falling snow,
Bleak as though by man deserted half a cen-
tury ago.

II.

Ah, the white-storm, velvet-footed, ah, the
treacherous, the cold,
Creeping, creeping to the bosom, there with
taloned clutch to hold,

Tricking with its soft embraces, kissing with
its fateful breath,
Loosing not its fascination till the heart lie
hushed in death;

Ah, the white-storm, ah, the cruel, settling
close on brook and mound,
Smoothing out the hollow places on the high,
uneven ground,

Masking hill and lake and river in its clinging
cloak of white,
And in sullen anger sweeping through the
weirdness of the night!

On an upward pathway wending, toiling pain-
fully, and slow,
Moving in uncertain fashion through the
trackless waste of snow,

Are a helpless man and woman, fighting hard
for life and breath,
All dismayed, for in the ice-wreaths they have
seen the Silent Death;

They have seen his haggard features, they
have watched his measured stride,
And they know that he is with them, walking
silent at their side;

If they falter, lo, they perish; if they pause,
he claims his own,
And they pray for help to heaven, for the
world is turned to stone.

Where is now the wish for riches, where the
hope in earthly things,
Where the music in the siren song the golden
guinea sings?

Lo, ambition's fleeting vision mocks the slowly
glazing eye
And the world is sodden ashes when a man is
marked to die.

O'er the leaden sky comes flashing slender
spires of ghostly light ,
Showing where the white-storm's forces seek
a bivouac for the night,

Showing outposts wheel and vanish with
their conquering banners furled
As if touched with sudden pity for a tortured,
helpless world.

Through the void come sounds of weeping,
incoherent words, and wild,
And the father presses roughly to his heart
his weeping child;

"O, my daughter, well-beloved! O, my
daughter, mine bereft!

"Angels guard thee, for in chaos thou hast no
protector left.

"Rest thy head upon my bosom, let me feel
thy hand in mine—

"Daughter, seest thou the splendor of a distant city shine?

"Heard'st thou not that sweet voice utter
words which thrill my weary breast,

" 'Come to me, thy work is ended, come to
me, for I am rest?'

"Fare thee well, my dear beloved, o'er rough
seas we long have sailed,

"I have tried to make safe harbor, I have
tried, and I have failed.

"Though the night of death divide us, lost
the way that we have trod,

"Still I know that 'dawn will find us somewhere 'neath the smile of God.' "

O, the Northland, callous hearted, vast and
cold and bleak and bare,

How may prayers reach out to heaven from
such desert of despair?

Comes the voice that slowly failing begs in
accents faint and low,

“Sing the song we love, my daughter, sing it
once before I go;

“Sing, ’twill help my trembling spirit find the
Light that marks the goal—”

Then from out the dark comes floating, “Jesus,
lover of my soul,”

And the night-bird stops to listen—“Let me
to Thy bosom fly,”

Breath of north wind, strangely tempered,
sighs o’er him about to die,

And the song to frenzied cry turns when his
struggling soul has passed,

“Father, to Thy haven guide him, O, receive
him Thine, at last.”

And the night is spent and weary, and the
dawn is near at hand,

And a soul has left the lesson it could never
understand,

But perhaps the tangled problem will one
day be clearer shown
When the man shall stand unhampered in
the glory of the throne.

III.

Through the hoar frost crimson pennons of
the dawn begin to show
And the crystal ice-spars glisten with an
iridescent glow.

In far distant lands, and kinder, when the
day begins to dawn,
Comes a chirrup from the tree tops and an
answer from the lawn,

From some neighboring branch's shelter goes
a flutter and a cry
And the matin song of Nature sweeps the
gold-empurpled sky,

All is motion, all is gladness, happy in re-
turning light,
Not the dead, oppressive stillness of this
gleaming waste of white,

Not this silence, hushed and lifeless as the
 shadowed face of Fate,
Brooding ever on the secret locked within its
 ice-bound gate ;

Here, no hills that call to meadows where
 cool, babbling rivers run,
Here, no joyous cry of greeting from the
 children of the sun.

Yet the horizon, dull tinted, shows faint mo-
 tion in the east,
Signs of life that make the wildness seem in
 loneliness increased,

Clear, and clearer, shows the outline 'gainst
 the stretch of yellow sky
And the startled air rolls pulsing underneath
 the hunter's cry.

Tokohoma, lithe and supple, Tokohoma, strong
 and brave,
Lord of all these sullen acres, lord of land, of
 air, of wave,

Lord, by right of full possession, where no
stranger forms intrude,
He, a chieftain, undisputed, reigns o'er realms
of solitude.

And he comes on fleet foot speeding over
white, uncharted tracts,
Storming, fearlessly, the ice-blocks in the
frozen cataracts,

Spurning drift on drift that, gleaming like
great milestones bleak and cold,
Mark the path of this new Hermes swift of
foot as he of old.

Now he pauses, stoops, and, seeming, ques-
tions something that is dumb,
Then darts back like winged arrow, back on
way so lately come,

And the startled white grouse question the
astonished face of dawn,
“Where his course?” and, “What his mission?”
Ere the answer, he is gone.

Gone, with doubt each hope defying, gone,
with pain of anxious breath,
Gone, on wings of fear fast flying, racing
with the phantom death;

Muscles tense, and nostrils swelling, back,
still back, each white drift rolls.
Tokohoma pressing closer to his heart the
thing he holds.

North, still north, till on his vision, lo, there
falls a welcome sight,
Rounded mound of snow-house glist'ning in
its new found dome of white,

Then, quick passes through its portal to the
haven of his quest,
Worn and wan, this Hermes, clasping still
his burden to his breast;

Burden strangely limp and lifeless, burden
fair as shines the sun,
Burden for which Tokohoma neck to neck
with death has run.

But the stretch is still uncovered, still uncertain
lies the goal—

Down upon his knees he drops, then, in his
agony of soul,

With his mind in dread commotion and his
heart in frenzied storm

While he tears the fur-lined wrappings from
the unresisting form ;

First, his own skin coat of sable he had
wrapped about her there

When he found her by her father, lost, within
the storm-god's lair,

Then complexities of garments that he does
not understand,

Frail and feminine, that perish underneath
his unskilled hand,

And the white arm lies before him in its still-
ness of repose,

And the tender throat as pulseless as is beauty
in the snows.

How he chafes her arms, her body, with no
moment's pause for rest,
How he turns his timid glances from the glory
of her breast,

How all hope goes out and darkness of de-
spair creeps in its place
As he, breathless, seeks some evidence of life
within her face,

How he labors long and tireless till the thing
he prays is done,
Let the melting snow-drift tell you as it fades
beneath the sun.

Swift a tide of feeling sweeps him when slight
sign of life returns,
Giving place to new emotions where deep
earnestness still burns,

And his trembling hand slow falters where
so firm has been his touch
Now that death is partly vanquished and the
foe has eased its clutch.

With the tenderness of woman he quick
clothes the waking form,
Lays it gently on heaped wolfskin, fox, and
brown seal, soft and warm,

Then withdraws a little distance resting pen-
sive in his place,
Looking with a deep emotion on the beauty
of her face;

Through his brain whirl dreams, traditions,
glints of fragmentary lore,
Foolish fancies of his people scarcely credited
before,

But of Fate none dares to question, and the
thing will be she wills,
And a feeling strange and sacred Tokohoma's
being thrills.

"Have you come?" he softly murmurs, "Has
the promise, then, been kept?
"O, my queen, you near did perish, death so
close to you had crept,

"I near lost you ere I found you, such the
limit of man's pow'r,
"Destiny he knows awaits him yet he cannot
name the hour.

"Have you come? Some import tells me the
prophetic word was true,
"And my soul to doubting question ever an-
swers, 'It is you.'

"It is you, of whose vague coming council
graybeards oft-times spoke,
"It is you, whose sacred mission was to lift
my people's yoke.

"It is you, your way swung hither, as on
orbit swings the star,
"Queen for me, and for my people, scattered,
lost and strayed afar ;

"All are gone, the winds of heaven from the
four points breathe their name,
"None is warrior, now, nor hunter, unmo-
lested feed the game ;

"They have sunk to trade, to barter, nor resent
the white man's jibe,

"And their chief, ashamed, self-exiled, stands
a chief without a tribe.

"You are come, your course appointed you
are helpless in your fate,

"You should be a queen of nations, not a
tribeless chieftain's mate,

"You should look on deeds of valor and praise
victories well won,

"And review your fearless warriors number-
less beneath the sun—

"Yet you may not. It is written you are
mine to have, to hold,

"You will love me—so the graybeards spake
in prophecy of old."

Life returns, and comes prophetic, as it
should, through troubled moan,

And the face of Tokohoma like another face
has grown;

All emotions quickly conquered now in depth
of shadow rest,
In his look no trace of tumult that so lately
swept his breast

For the bird must not be 'frighted though
to flame his heart be fanned,
Not until she comes to love him can he make
her understand.

Doubt that she will love him henceforth will
be foreign to his mind,
He has questioned, and decided, question now
is left behind

And his heart, untamed and simple, wakens
to one sole desire
And in crucible of beauty, lo, is left there
molten fire.

Calm he stands, the strength of manhood
marked in wild, unstudied grace
And his dark eyes showing blacker 'gainst
the fairness of his face.

IV.

There are times when breath is bitter ; there
are times when life is dust ;
There are times the tortured soul cries out
against the body's rust ;

There are times when adverse waters sweep
life's ship with fateful roar,
When oblivion were better than to strand
upon the shore.

She who lies there scarce accredits that the
fires of life still burn,
Thoughts, in slow and halting fashion, back
o'er snow-framed pictures turn,

And vague mem'ry dawning clearer to a better
sense of grief
Wakes to find but keener anguish in its
efforts for relief.

Tokohoma waits the turning of the quick-
ening pulses' flow,
Sees the lips' and cheeks' gray pallor to faint
shade of crimson grow,

Watches dark-fringed eyelids quiver as they
feel the life-tide rise
And, at last, his soul meets, melting, that
strange glory of her eyes.

Kindness, nature's common language, speaks
when helpless lips are dumb,
Through it babe and painted savage to sweet
understanding come,

Through it all the blighting stigma of a life
may be enfurled,
Through it once a man was given to arouse a
sleeping world.

She divines this simple kindness that within
his glances rest
And a storm of bitter weeping sweeps the
tumult of her breast.

Naught she asks of how she came here,
naught of question dimly lights
Mind distraught that, heavy burdened, takes
as yet but halting flights.

'Tis enough a fellow creature sympathizes
with despair,
Anguish questions not of glances that the look
of pity wear ;

Out to him her arms she holds then in impassioned way and wild
And he soothes her bitter moaning as a father
soothes his child.

Long she sobs till founts of anguish hold no
more of tears to weep,
Till exhaustion, mast'ring sorrow, yields it up
to troubled sleep.

And she wakes to days of fever, wakes to
nights of bitter pain,
Only Tokohoma conscious of how long she
thus has lain.

Only Tokohoma knowing how was watched
each fitful breath,

How was fought a second battle with the
dreaded wraith of death,

How a second time he, victor, hid the joy of
what he felt,

And the great white silence, only, heard, "I
thank Thee," as he knelt.

V.

As beneath its woe of winter cold and sombre
 lies the earth,
As the naked shrubs, like mortals, moan their
 doubt of life's rebirth,

As the rivers shroud their faces in their mourn-
 ing cloaks of snow
So do human hearts, dull-burdened, 'neath
 grief's winter, sunless grow.

Tokohoma tries to lighten in these convales-
 cent days
That faint smile, more sad than weeping, that
 upon her pale lip plays;

Not unmoved by kind endeavor, though from
 grief no nearer wooed,
She, to please him, smiles a little, such the
 sense of gratitude.

After tempest comes the sunshine, after winter
comes the spring,

Not forever shall the mourning cry through
sorrow's cavern ring;

Tokohoma sees the roses on pale cheeks begin
to glow,

Sees faint hope, again transcendent, o'er the
darkness radiance throw.

In these days he searches mem'ry for stray
threads of useful art,

In these days the thing projected holds some
impress of his heart,

In these days the deerskin wrapping, thong of
hide, and belt of fur

Take strange tints of unguessed beauty, since
he fashions them for her.

By her couch he sits whole evenings, resting
pensive hand on cheek,

Joyous if she give commission, happy if she
will but speak;

Unreservedly she tells him of the vagrant
 hopes that start,
Of desires long since relinquished that were
 wont to fret her heart.

Thus he has small need to question of the
 things that he would learn,
Thus her heart an open book is, and its leaves
 in sequence turn

While he reads the broken story of a life still
 young in years
But deep bowed with age when looked at
 through its mist of blurring tears.

These, the lines that touch her deepest, are
 the ones most often read
Though the plans that lie transcribed there are
 reviewed as projects dead ;

As the moth with hurt wing flutters round
 the candle's dying beams,
So does man forever hover near the wreckage
 of his dreams.

In the trend of daily converse froth thoughts
float like ocean foam,
And from beat of inward tumult rises oft the
word of "Home."

Home, that place of peace, of comfort, where
the weary heart can rest,
Home, that word which strikes vibrating on
the gnarld strings of the breast!

Tokohoma vaguely gathers from her, now,
repose of mind,
That this cherished dream, like others, has
been sadly left behind,

And a surging thought sweeps o'er him, as
o'er pine-tops sweeps the blast,
Leaving him unsteady, swaying, when the
fevered thrill has past,

Leaving him in deep emotion that is near
akin to prayer
And his brow full-flushed in beauty by the
thought it shelters there.

When her strength is well recovered then he
leaves her for a space,
To return each night with myst'ry overspread-
ing all his face.

To her questions of his absence he gives pre-
text ever new
And close guards each word lest inkling of
his secret filter through.

Dawning suns see busy fingers shaping crude
things into form,
Flurried snow-flakes pause to question ere
they merge within the storm,

Help of hope in light transcendent seems to
shine from gift above,
All of toil is zephyr lightness when the task
is that of love;

And the day stands golden lettered in the
shifting sands that run
When, triumphant, Tokohoma views his
heart's great labor done.

O, the joy that sweeps the Northland, close
to anguish deep allied.

On that day when Tokohoma finds the frail
one at his side

Out among his bleak possessions, ringed afar
by gleaming heights,

Out beneath the changing weirdness of the
restless northern lights :

Through the dusk of noonday glitter discs
of silver, touched with gold,

Where the sun-dogs pierce the hoar frost
hanging sinister and cold ;

Naught so poignant or impressive here, where
sovereign forces meet,

As the sense of desolation that is crushing
and complete.

Soon, when nearer things are noticed, she a
tiny cabin sees,

Outlined yonder near the snow-house 'gainst
a ground of distant trees :

There her instinct quickly answers questions
 she has long repressed
And a strange emotion flutters, like a weakness,
 in her breast.

Tokohoma, watching mutely, tries her purpose to divine,
Ere she turns and utters simply, "Let us enter. It is mine."

Quietly she takes possession, quietly essays to speak,
Burning rose and pallid lily alternating in her cheek,

And as scattered sea-drift whispers of that wealth the wave conceals,
So her kindly smile is index to the gratitude she feels.

In no time of their abiding, strange, and intimate, and fleet,
Has the pulse of Tokohoma in such wanton fashion beat ;

She, unconscious of his weakness, seeks new
wonders to extol,
While he trembles lest his secret burst the
bond of stern control.

When the dearth of simple objects leaves no
more to be admired,
Down she sinks on rug of wolfskin like a
child with laughter tired,

Noting, still, her strange possessions, prais-
ing, still, with ling'ring glance,
Searching close lest any treasure has been
overlooked by chance,

And when all but well decided as her eyes
sweep walls and floor,
Yonder sees some shining object she had let
escape before.

Quickly come to where it glistens, wide of
eye and hushed of breath,
O'er her rounded cheek swift sweeping
spreads a pallor gray as death.

From its place she lifts a necklace, crude of
workmanship and plan,
Nuggets, linked in simple fashion, large and
small, a circlet span,

And her hesitating fingers o'er each rough-
ened surface play
While she questions Tokohoma in repressed
and rapid way:

How he came by their possession? What
their story? Where their source?
Looking back her way seems swung here
by some strange and occult force.

She, like every artless dreamer, hopeful for
the thing long planned,
Sees a fate in each occurrence that she fails
to understand;

And she waits for confirmation of the thing
already guessed,
But his answer breathes evasion, clearly leav-
ing much suppressed;

And he begs that she will tell him what the
power is, ere he speaks,
That so swift has changed the color of the
damask of her cheeks ;

What the force is that for ages has not
loosed its mystic hold
On the heart that in the white man, lusts to
clasp the yellow gold.

And she answers, speaking softly in her
earnestness of tone,
Every word imbued with color from the sor-
rows she has known :

"Gold is talisman for evil, gold is happiness,
is rest,

"Gold is balm for every sorrow that assails
the human breast,

"Gold is guide for them that struggle in the
sea of daily strife,

"Gold is counselor, magician, gold is beauty,
gold is life ;

"Gold is synonym for honor, it is glory, it is
fame,

"Gold's a crutch for social cripples with ob-
scurity of name,

"Gold a trickster is, its palmings e'en the
skeptical convince,

"For its lack proclaims the peon, its abundance
names the prince.

"By it race, and caste, and teachings all are
leveled in a breath:

"It makes equal slave and master as effectually
as death,

"And so full it taints and tinges all that fancy
may behold

"That its power scales even heaven to bespeak
the streets of gold;

"In the sky the moon hangs golden, golden
shines the sun above,

"Gold is head, and heart, and feeling, gold is
friendship, gold is love."

Seeing then that Tokohoma deeply on each
word attends,

She, in tone half grave, half jesting, that a
lighter humor lends,

Adds, "These Midas gifts, as fleeting as the
breath that scents the rose,

Are for thee, too, could men name thee Prince
of Gold, thou Prince of Snows."

VI.

Like a great white sphinx the Northland lies
implacable and dread;
Dull and gray the arch of heaven frowns,
low-bending, overhead;

Sullen snow-fields, void of luster, rest be-
neath a pulseless sky,
Stretch on stretch of space spreads empty,
undisturbed by call or cry;

Silence wraps the lake and river, silence
shrouds the copse and hill,
Sound is 'frighted by the silence and remains
forever still;

What of life is here speeds noiseless, appre-
hensive, and afraid,
Ever fearful of some horror unaccountably
delayed.

Here is heard no soothing rustle from the
leaves of swaying trees,

Here is seen no dancing ripples spraying
shores of inland seas,

Here the mocking northlight flashes in a
jagged arc of red,

Here the earth lies wan and ghastly, to its
soul benumbed and dead:

Here the phantom dusk slow merges into
weird, fantastic night,

And a mighty hush low crouches on eternal
beds of white.

In the west rise towering mountains, by a
river interlaced,

Whose approach is dragon-guarded, tier on
tier, by glistening waste:

Rugged boulders, javelin-pointed, rise dis-
puters of the way,

Black abysses spread their pitfalls to entrap
unwary prey:

Precipices roughly threaten where had
seemed an open path,
Yawning chasms breathe the story of some
deep, insatiate wrath,

Noxious gases, slowly lifting, merge within
the ruling frost,
Deeply sprung from such weird darkness
that their origin is lost.

On one towering peak, that rises more for-
bidding than the rest,
Is a giant crag hung midway, sheer and dread,
'twixt base and crest;

Far above its walls of granite shimmer to a
giddy height,
Far beneath a cliff drops darkly into mystery
and night.

Here no mark of wandering hoof-beat strays
to scar the crusted snows,
Here formidable defenses guard the great
crag's bleak repose,

Here the wild, aggressive aspect softening
drifts cannot efface,
And a heart inured to danger well may pause
in such a place.

To the rock there seems appended some discernible approach,
Though great boulders mar its outline and
though frozen streams encroach;

Years, long years, with brow dark beetling,
it has scowled on hill and plain,
Years, long years, its glooming shadow on
the mountain's breast has lain.

When the Spring unclasps the river from its
long-locked icy sheath,
Then a second crag floats trembling in the
waters far beneath,

And the white-finned salmon darting where
the depths of crystal gleam
Shun the shade that wavers darkly as it falls
athwart the stream.

Vague tradition wraps in shadow deeper still
the jagged crest,
And far out upon the seacoast where the red
sun gilds the West

Lives a tale of how a warrior bore the death
he rightly won
Who designed to lead a paleface to the
Great Crag of the Sun.

One dull dawn, before the ghost-light fades
beneath advancing day,
Over drifts that lie unbroken Tokohoma
takes his way;

North he speeds o'er rising uplands that de-
flect toward the west,
Where the Great Crag, looming darkly, stirs
strange tumult in his breast;

Many times its rugged outline he has traced
against the sky,
Many times its sober grandeur has com-
pelled his heart and eye,

Though familiar with its phases as it rises
bleak and sheer,
Yet he ne'er has braved its shadow but with
superstitious fear.

Soon the plain is left behind him stretching
far toward the east,
And he turns to face new hazards that each
moment are increased,

Cautiously he goes, and slowly, in the hush
of bated breath,
For who braves the Crag's dominions braves
them hand in hand with death.

Giant rocks must be surmounted, shad'wy
chasms must be crossed,
Shallow footholds forced in ice-blocks where
the mountain streams have tossed,

Spines of jagged rock are pathways swung
between the earth and sky,
Where his heart must beat courageous if he
have no wish to die.

Here he skirts a ledge, long riven by the
force of some past shock,
Where lie fossil ferns embedded in the strata
of the rock ;

Here is shunned a pit smooth-cruised by its
overhanging drifts
Fairy edged in feathery hoar frost trembling
lightly in the rifts.

Where this fissure yawns abysmal to a depth
of fearful gloom
Is the spot the redskin traitor met the horror
of his doom.

Tokohoma nears its darkness. He must leap
it. It is done.
And he sinks fatigued and breathless at the
Great Crag of the Sun. .

Here he rests till day comes bursting o'er
the plain in angry red,
Till the lurid light beats fiercely on the rock
swung overhead,

Then he rises, stands a moment, like a sinner
unconfessed,

Who, enamored of his weakness, cannot
pluck it from his breast,

And with glances strangely solemn watches
shadows change and lift
To disclose beneath the Great Crag, in the
ledge, a narrow rift

With a vaulted arch beyond it stretching back-
ward into gloom,
Wrapped in dread and heavy silence like the
hush within a tomb.

Here he enters, recent struggle marked in lines
upon his face
Set in stolid resolution no conviction may dis-
place,

In a calm of deadened feeling, like a swimmer,
cramped and numb,
Who sinks passive 'neath the waters he has
failed to overcome.

—
Scarce his eyes become accustomed to the
cavern's lesser light
Than his sluggish fancy quickens to one
sweeping, backward flight ;

Sacred pledges, oaths, traditions, crowd the
cave's forbidden door,
But the pictures are unwelcome, he resolves
to look no more.

And he turns where broken stratum, virgin
vein, and glist'ning bed
Show the velvet yellow changing to a fierce
and sullen red

'Neath a shaft of sunlight piercing like a
knife-blade keen and thin
Through the dark to probe the secret of the
mystery within.

Gold is here, pure, unpolluted by the hand of
want or greed,
Though the heart of many a chieftain has
been tempted in his need,

But a breast may beat with honor though denied
 emblazed device,
And a man's a man, though redskin, and may
 stand beyond a price.

Through injustice, through privation, through
 the white man's threat and bribe,
Has the secret been close guarded by the trust-
 ed of the tribe.

It had been a hope, a safeguard, should their
 landholds be assailed,
It was held a final resource when all other
 means had failed.

For themselves, such garish bauble it were in
 them to despise
But each knew the fascination that it shed for
 other eyes,

And the vague, uncertain future was a theme
 for lesser fear
With such ward against the season when the
 paleface should appear.

And he came. The moaning pine boughs sway
 beneath the polar star
To repeat the old, old story of the lands that
 lie afar,

Teepees gone, and lodges empty, confiscate
 by law of might
And the redman, naked, vanished into nothing-
 ness and night.

Then it was that graybeard councils gazing
 o'er their broken host
Swore to circumvent the white man in the
 thing he wished the most,

And each calmed his outraged bosom when
 despoiled and overrun
By an oath to keep the secret of the Great
 Crag of the Sun.

Hasten, hasten, Tokohoma! Work while thou
 hast yet the day.
Let no sacred pledge deter thee, let no retro-
 spect delay,

Fuller pile thy mooseskin pouches till their
space can hold no more,

Work, proud prince, forget that labor ne'er
has soiled thy hands before.

Work, and quell that cry within thee that goes
harking through the years

Back to suff'rings of thy people, men's priva-
tions, women's tears,

And forget that near the Yukon where the
white man spreads his tent

Glide, at intervals, strange figures with their
gray locks lowly bent

That abide awhile unquestioned, like to souls
that stand exempt,

To observe the strife for riches with grim,
satisfied contempt—

That come somewhere from the silence to be
seen awhile of men

Then, with cloaks close wrapped about them,
back to silence sink again.

Hasten, hasten, Tokohoma, let no scruple
 stay thy hand,
Who has erred he will forgive thee, who has
 loved will understand.

Hesitate no more upon it, clear thy heart of
 fretting doubt,
Act, and if thou may'st, with honor, if thou
 may'st not, then without.

Ofttimes what has loomed enormous dwindles
 when the thing be done,
Thus thy project, with the gauntlet of thy
 superstitions run.

Thou, a Croesus, heard'st that spoken which
 through all thy being thrilled
Yet doth stand, like others, grieving for a wish
 still unfulfilled?

Hast thou dreamed, perhaps, that somewhere
 something might be held unsold?
Hast thou fear of limitation for this sullen,
 glist'ning gold?

Ease thy mind, O Tokohoma, work while thou
hast day above,

"Gold is head, and heart, and feeling, it is
friendship, it is love."

VII.

Life within the snow-house settles to a semblance of repose ;
Every day, like that before it, void of interest comes and goes,

Every day a deeper damask shades the convalescent's cheek
And a lighter tone breaks gently where but grief was wont to speak.

Hope will live while life can struggle, biding fortune's adverse moods
And from sorrow comes a patience that rebukes vicissitudes.

She who had despaired now rallies as the laggard days go by
And inclines to'ard hope, through instinct, for to lose it were to die.

Surely naught of hope lies yonder where bleak
glaciers mark the south,
Surely naught of promise glistens in the river's
ice-choked mouth,

Yet she clings in stubborn courage that the
North alone can give
To some undefined impression that is hope in
things that live.

Tokohoma tends his game snares going out
each day at dawn
To retrace each feath'ry footmark ere the
mists of morn are gone ;

When the drifts are deeply crusted and when
clement winds abide
He is seen on plain and upland, a companion
by his side.

Oft their forms are silhouetted on the dull
sky's yellow rim
As they swing o'er rise and lowland, strong
of breath and free of limb.

Hindered by no clinging garments, wearied
by no useless dress
She who stands in fur and buckskin stands a
woman none the less

With the touch sublime and subtle, deeply ly-
ing, that defies
Any form of garb to change it, any custom to
disguise.

Mile on mile is quickly covered over stretches
bleak and bare—
Thus she finds the panacea that can cope
against despair,

Thus contrives to tire her body that all thought
may be at rest
And remains abroad the longer when her heart
is most distressed.

Tokohoma ne'er surmises what is passing in
her mind,
In his self-hallucination he remains content
and blind,

And construes to suit his pleasure sighs
that inadvertent start
While she feeds, all unsuspecting, the strange
passion of his heart.

Time comes round when such long rambles fail
to bring the peace desired
When against her hopeful courage all the
Northland seems conspired ;

Its great, glistening plains appal her, its relent-
lessness affrights,
Menace taints the gloomy story its forbidding
finger writes

And she ofttimes seeks the shelter of the cabin
tired, unnerved,
There to shut away the picture, there to sor-
row unobserved,

There to feel the hope for succor sink beneath
assailing doubt
And a poignant dread steal o'er her of those
silent ways without.

One day prostrate thus, but hiding each distress of heart and mind
Lest the tears should seem ungrateful, and the discontent unkind,

One day, just as twilight darkens to the shade that evening wears
And she bends in deep attention o'er her meager household cares,

Far from out the void comes trembling that which makes her pulses start,
That which holds the blood suspended in the ways that touch her heart ;

Something vague, and yet apparent, tangible, and still unreal,
Seems to spread in widening circles and through all the Northland steal ;

Something undefined, elusive, that a moment fills the pause
Lying 'twixt her heart's sensations and the question of the cause,

Loud, then soft, then sunk to nothing, as each
air-gust fades and swells,
Intermittent sound and silence like the rhythmic swing of bells.

On the wind seems borne the fragment of a
trailing, broken word,
Quick she turns, but Tokohoma gives no sign
if he has heard,

And she scarce has lent attention to her small
pursuits again,
Checking what she would have spoken, pond'-
ring what it may have been,

When a gust of stronger pressure sweeping
past the cabin door
Brings the sound in vibrant measure, this time
louder than before.

This time there is no mistaking, this time
Tokohoma hears,
Quick he gains the cabin doorway, through the
purpling twilight peers

To behold a muffled figure swinging o'er the
 dark'ning snow,
And to meet a salutation sounded in a deep
 "Hallo!"

Scarcely is the greeting answered, scarce the
 first surprise is o'er,
Ere the dogs and sled sweep circling to a
 halt before the door;

Here they loom unreal and spectral in the
 slow declining light
While the stranger's hearty accents beg a
 shelter for the night.

It is said, by them that suffer, that despair
 alone can kill,
These have never known the anguish of a great
 joy's sudden thrill.

She, within, stands tense and rigid, like to one
 of power bereft,
And, from out fast merging senses, finds but
 expectation left

When at last they stand together in the half
lit, low walled place,
Deep and differing emotions showing plainly
in each face.

O, what energy is wasted in pursuit of false
desires!
O, what sacrifices redden, feeding useless altar
fires!

Through the world we seek life's touchstone,
ardently, from sun to sun,
And the hour 'tis least expected, lo, the won-
drous thing is done.

And 'tis not the wealth of wisdom, and 'tis
not the glint of gold,
It is not the thing long dreamed of, that ob-
tained, we priceless hold

But a rainbow tinted bubble showing, to aston-
ished eyes,
Giant plan and cherished purpose dwarfed to
things of pigmy size;

And the shimm'ring opalescence that fills
earth and sky above
Is the old, familiar story, which is all, for it
is love.

In the time it takes the glances to observe the
lightning's sheen
It was done, yet not so quickly but one watch-
ing there has seen ;

In the redman dormant passions to their
channels wildly set
As the look of maid and stranger tell that
kindred souls have met.

VIII.

When we love, the thing that frets us is un-
willingly believed,
We are wroth with doubts of warning, happier,
far, to be deceived;

Some strange madness holds us sanguine e'en
beneath suspicion's frown
And we scarce admit disaster when our house
of cards goes down.

So it is with Tokohoma when the first wild
flush is o'er,
When the inward tumult settles to the calm it
knew before,

With the difference that his passions now
awakened to distrust
Lie, a lake of seething lava, straining at the
broken crust.

But he makes each doubt subservient to the
 hope that love inspires
And continues blind and stubborn in the way
 of his desires.

Many morns have now been numbered by
 the sun's uncertain light
Since the stranger begged the favor of a shelter
 for the night.

When came troops of urgent promptings that
 he should resume his way
Compromise would 'wait on duty to result in
 fresh delay.

She of gentle heart, full naively, all her sweet
 persuasion lends
And through days of happy converse the pro-
 tracted stay extends ;

Time is tuned to love and raptures that no
 further wish comprise
Than the priv'lege of confession, told already
 through the eyes.

Life takes on a brighter color in the days that
follow this,

All the Northland seems transfigured as be-
neath an angel's kiss ;

Maid and lover find new beauty in the vari-
tinted sky,

Watch together bright plumed eagles that,
o'er hilltops, circling fly,

Hunt the home of snowflowers nestling in the
bosom of the drifts

And explore, like happy children, caves of
overhanging rifts.

Sometimes, in excess of spirits, when she lifts
her voice in song

It is heard by Tokohoma, faintly, as he
speeds along

With his steps still to'ard the darkness of the
Great Crag in the west

And the hope of love still vibrant to each pulse-
beat of his breast.

Since that night of jealous anger when the
 stranger first appeared
He has held in leash his passions and dismissed
 the things he feared.

'Tis his way with mooted questions to re-
 volve them o'er and o'er,
But when once they are decided to revert to
 them no more.

Thus his usual projects find him with a clear,
 untroubled mind,
With no anxious doubt attaching to the pair
 he leaves behind,

Who, their happy love indulging, greet each
 other at the dawn
With no thought of Tokohoma save that he
 abroad is gone.

Glad that day is here before them where the
 darkness late has been
Glad to roam their snow-ringed Eden giv'n
 to love each other in,

Still they watch the sun-shafts brighten
 through the overhanging haze
All unskilled to read the secret of those tower-
 ing peaks they praise,

All unconscious that the Great Crag shows
 beneath the rising sun,
That the work will, 'neath its shadow, in a lit-
 tle time be done.

Love, confessed, at last lies tranquil 'neath
 contentment that it brings
And the talk of maid and stranger turns again
 to other things ;

Plan and project half forgotten in the joys
 that nearer pressed
Now return with deeper interest, fevered
 with the old unrest.

When the lover shares the secret of his mission
 there, it seems
Warp and woof of that frail fabric which the
 substance is of dreams ;

Deep the story is with interest, he who tells
it halts for breath
Like to him from whom he had it ere his lips
were sealed in death.

Meager word he has for guidance, mem'ry
only serves for plan,
But 'tis here, this wealth of Croesus, in the
circle of a span.

Once again the North is calling with the siren
voice of old,
Once again ambition trembles with the lust
for yellow gold.

Once again the tinkling sledge-bells fret the
silence of the dawn
And return to find the snow-house when the
shades of night are drawn.

Days are spent in fruitless effort, empty search,
and useless toil,
Hope sustained on that which fails it must
upon itself recoil.

But the sting of disappointment when the
 primal pain is o'er,
Leaves the stranger still as eager, and as sanguine as before.

Thus he spends the time indulging old ambitions, hope compels;
Thus each night the maid who loves him
 listens, listens, for the bells,

And their distant, muffled echo lightly tossed
 from mound to mound
Rolls but faint, still all her being leaps responsive to the sound.

Yet, at times, come vague present'ments, that,
 in terror, hold her dumb;
What if never from the silence should the
 sledge-bells tinkling come?

What if yonder sun declining mark the epoch
 with its beams
When her soul shall wake to torment from the
 joy of empty dreams?

Thus, full oft, she frets her spirit with the
pain of love's alarms,
Thus, full oft, misgivings vanish, fading 'neath
protecting arms.

Once, when such grave dread assails her that
her eyes o'erflow with tears,
And her lover soothes with kisses all her doubts
and foolish fears,

One approaching to'ard the cabin where a
ling'ring sunbeam plays,
Stops without to view the picture, as it were,
through crimson haze ;

From his back, as is his custom, flings his game
upon the floor,
But omits the usual greeting as he steps within
the door.

IX.

Morn across the endless snow-fields creeps re-
luctantly and gray,
Loath to mock the dead, bleak silence with the
light of coming day,

Heavy o'er each hill and river slow it steals
with laggard feet
Where the hoar frost clings in garlands like
a mold'ring winding-sheet;

It would seem that some stray life-throb
should, at dawn, in gladness start
But the whole white stretch lies pulseless, cold
and sullen to its heart.

Yet about the cabin yonder signs of waking
motion shows,
But 'tis alien to the landscape and the great
North's grim repose.

First the sledge-dogs start the echoes to an-
nounce that night is fled
Springing up to greet the sunlight from each
warm, snow-burrowed bed.

From the snow-house comes the stranger,
drowsy still beneath some dream
Half regretting that 'twas broken by the
clamor of the team.

All night long had sleep been troubled, all
night long had shadows pressed
Round his couch to lend discomfort and with
discord fill his breast ;

Faces had, in wanton fashion flashing by, re-
signed their place
To a mask, that came and vanished, like to
Tokohoma's face,

But when day in listless motion o'er the hills
began to creep
Then his troubled mind had drifted to a calmer,
sweeter sleep,

Filled with vagrant fancies merging to a better,
happier trend
That the outcry from the sledge-dogs interrupted ere the end.

Soon the eager team, full harnessed, stands
impatient for the start,
Once again the lover, turning, holds the maiden
to his heart,

Who, with that vague fear upon her which
from too great love will grow,
Closely clings to him in silence, strangely
loath to let him go.

When his form is but a shadow in the distance these alarms
Haunt her still and through perverseness seem
to mock her empty arms ;

But to quell each fond misgiving soon more
cheerful thoughts arise,
Sanguine dreams of fairer countries bring back
hope to wistful eyes,

She, pretending, reads the future from the
book's unopened leaves
With attention keenly busy on the woof that
fancy weaves.

All day long she feels the promise of a happier
fortune spring,
All day long bright hopes around her like a
benediction cling

And when night across the Northland in a
heavy pall is drawn
She, in doubt, can scarce accredit that the
happy day is gone.

Household duties now commanding, quick she
trims a feeble light,
Stops between her cares to listen to the noises
of the night ;

Something yonder, tense and sullen, sweeps
the earth with broken moan,
She who hears stands dumb and rigid like an
image carved in stone.

Far, far out, each surging air-gust fateful
forces swift invites—

This the sound is that, full-swelling, spoke of
death that night of nights!

Round the hut stray, hurried snowflakes com-
ing forces half reveal,
Bitter cold through chink and cranny pierces
like the thrust of steel.

In the lulls that come abruptly, quick succeed-
ing fitful swells,
She, within, in deep attention, once more
listens for the bells,

Once more hears their muffled music roll along
the changing mounds
Once more marks each tinkling cadence trail
away in broken sounds,

Once more waits within the cabin where such
happiness has been
Till the low-browed door shall open and her
lover enter in.

Footsteps o'er the snow come creaking to announce him near, at last,
Soon the cabin door swings shiv'ring from before a biting blast

That sweeps walls, and floor, and ceiling,
shrieking loud in mad delight,
Then whirls back, past Tokohoma, to be lost within the night.

For the time that spans a moment still he stands without remark,
Strangely tall his stalwart figure looms against the outer dark,

In his black hair frost wreaths glisten, snow-flakes fleck his wolfskin coat,
Torn, perhaps by jagged boulders, and loose hanging at the throat.

Sullenly at last he enters, to all outward presence blind,
Deeply sunk 'twould seem in problems that revolve within his mind.

Lightly moves the maid preparing that which
forms the evening meal,
But full oft to'ard Tokohoma do her furtive
glances steal;

To her mind come wild suggestions that her
inmost soul rejects,
She refuses as preposterous this strange thing
she half suspects;

Then the truth comes full upon her sharp, con-
vincing, clear defined,
And explains much bitter rancor in the heart
once known as kind.

As the falcon stares bewildered when first
loosed from jess and hood
So she, dazed, now looks on actions until now
misunderstood;

In the light of this revealing she becomes con-
fused and dumb—
They must go, herself and lover, lest some
fearful evil come.

Tokohoma, sitting silent, makes as if he would
 arise,
There seems menace in his action, there seems
 madness in his eyes ;

O'er the maid sweep vague present'ments,
 what they are she scarce can say,
But her heart reads evil omen in her lover's
 long delay.

In this drift of speculation time has passed
 not marked before,
Up she starts, alarmed and anxious, swift pro-
 ceeds toward the door

And when faint and all but sinking 'neath the
 problem of her doubt
Tokohoma flashes past her and in frenzy
 rushes out.

Out, far out, his form soon merges in the
 shadows of the west ;
Out, far out, with dread emotions storming
 fiercely in his breast,

Glad he is to whip through wind-gusts sweep-
ing by with broken wail,
Glad he is to buffet forces marshalled for the
gathering gale :

Swift he spurns each ice-clad boulder, heedless
passes trap and lure,
Scorns to cling where shallow footholds mark
the way as insecure,

Wildly leaps each drift and chasm, desp'rate
till the goal be won
And at last stands torn and bleeding 'neath
the Great Crag of the Sun.

Scudding clouds that fly wind driven, show a
path of ghostly light
Where the pale moon, hanging distant, seems
to mock the frozen night.

In a patch of open sky-line where the forces
thinly set
Tokohoma's storm-swept figure shows in inky
silhouette ;

He, like one in sudden madness, bares his
temples to the blast,
Caring not for dangers present, dwelling not
on dangers past ;

He disdains each giant wind-gust that assails
his eerie place
And that lifts his hair and flings it like a
whip across his face

But he feels no outward lashing of his passion
driven form
And his wild, disheveled figure seems the
spirit of the storm.

Once, his arms he stretches upward like to one
who bears the pain
Of a grief, that grown to crush him, he no
longer may sustain,

Then, as if to thwart emotions out of which
such weakness grew,
Quickly turns toward the cavern and the work
left still to do.

When desires that love has cherished, when the
 life that love has planned
Fade away in swift destruction ere we come to
 understand,

Then 'tis not the final wrecking of our hopes
 that rends the heart
But the looking on the dumb things that have
 been of love a part.

Tokohoma takes the pouches, one by one, from
 out their place
And a wave of tender feeling hotly burns
 within his face ;

Dreams are here, and fancied projects, in these
 mooseskin pouches rolled,
Hopes and sweet anticipations, garnered with
 the gathered gold ;

Here are gentle thoughts compelling to'ard
 the love he hoped to win
And beneath each thong some life-drop of his
 heart is fastened in.

Rouse thyself, O Tokohoma, let thy inner
soul be dumb;
Is it royal prince, or woman, that can thus be
overcome?

Thou hast seen a star swing hither and its
orbit touched thy course—
It has passed—thy way is yonder, true to thy
compelling force.

Rouse thyself and let the temper of thy fathers
in thee speak,
Let thy manhood shame the weakness showing
pallid on thy cheek,

And the work that brought thee hither, let it
be completely done,
It is well that hope should end here where thy
folly was begun.

Then, beneath the crag is motion that would
kin to frenzy seem,
In the fitful light quick flashes that which
shows with velvet gleam;

Down, deep down, through space descending,
hard and yellow, shining, cold,
Leaps, with sudden flings and dashes, hoard on
hoard of glist'ning gold:

Down it springs like bright blades flashing,
each removed from shrouding sheath,
Till it hides within the shadows of the river
far beneath.

When at last the task is ended Tokohoma turns
his face
And looks long toward the cabin, standing
rigid in his place:

In his pose is that intenseness of a question
deep involved,
In his look that indecision of a purpose half
resolved;

But he turns aside suggestions, holding one
alone exempt
And at last this, too, dismisses with a gesture
of contempt.

Wild and strange his form in shadow marks
itself against the light
As he turns and sets sharp northward to be lost
within the night.

X.

When the storm is spent and morning in the
curtained east is shown
Then the Northland, cold and empty, comes
again into its own.

Naught disturbs the lonely distance save a
cry that spreads afar
As a wolf, on crouching haunches, points his
nose toward a star.

Landmarks that were things familiar lie in-
consequent and strange;
Where was life now seems existent some mute
evidence of change,

Restless snow-drifts hedge the cabin and the
snow-house close about
And the paths before their doorways are for-
ever blotted out.

Like a wraith, the chill of morning through the
hut, unhindered, steals
And it writes in silver tracings of the things
the light reveals,

Yet it can record no motion that the distant
dawn awoke
Save that from the lamp, still burning, trails a
line of quiv'ring smoke ;

Too, a sheet of snow, thin drifted, creeps
across the cabin floor
Like a restless ghost, and yonder, just outside
the open door,

Tiny whirls of powd'ry lightness hiss against
a growing mound
That has ris'n to hide beneath it what has
stained the frozen ground.

Fitful gusts of wind, sharp circling, quickly
fill each sunken rift
Cov'ring close the sledge's burden lying
deep within the drift.

When the laggard sun, slow mounting, gives
the day a deeper glow
Then is shown two quiet figures outlined
'neath the drifted snow,

One a man's is, all unconscious that his blood-
less lips are pressed
By a woman, who, still kneeling, clasps her
lover to her breast.

In the North the air hangs heavy 'neath the
silence of the years
And the wind moans low and broken as it
sweeps between the spheres.

EARTH'S LESSON.

Why should we not bring smiles instead of tears
To lay upon the altar-stone of God?
Why hold beliefs of superstitious years
That dwarf the spirit with discordant fears
And outrage flesh with harsh, insulting rod?

Why should we not come singing to the throne
With hearts that in ebullieny of joy
Seem bursting from their cells, too narrow grown?
O, why should man reap nothing of the sown
But tares, and all the beautiful destroy?

The feast is spread and we are asked to dine;
What sullenness of temper does it show
To rudely turn from kindly proffered wine
And pass with shielded eyes where splendors shine.
The Father never meant it should be so.

Sing, sing fair earth, till every silent throat
Responds unto the life-song of your sod
And thunder-sounding rolls each swelling note ;
And teach us by your own sweet, simple rote
To smile beneath the kindly smile of God.

THEN AS NOW.

Long, long ago when butterflies
Could converse hold, and let men know
Their wants, they caught the traits of men
As I will undertake to show.

Two butterflies were winging past
King Solomon's temple, grand and vast ;
From touch of wing and foolish flutter
'Twas plain unto the most benighted,
Their troth had just that day been plighted.

Like maid perplexed when blushes come,
My Lady Butterfly was dumb,
But, bursting with his own importance,
My great Lord Butterfly, loquacious,
Spoke of himself in way audacious.

"You see yon temple, dear," he said;
She answered, "Yes," by nod of head;
"Well, with my wing, all down encovered,
I easily those pillars, polished,
Could tumble at your feet, demolished."

This bold remark was overheard
By Solomon: "Upon my word
Who ever knew such braggart boasting?"
Then calling him aside, demanded
Why he should lie thus open-handed.

Returning to his mate at last,
She, woman-like, asked what had passed;
And he, man-like, to stop at nothing
So, with eclat, he might come through it,
Replied, "He asked me not to do it."

THE EARTH-CALL.

To you, in cowl and gown,
Who stand aloof with hands crossed on your
 breast
And patient head bowed down,
Do wild thoughts ever come?
Do ghosts of former hours now long since spent
In phantom shape renew the joys they lent
And hold you in their vagaries of air;
Do you at times awake to find your prayer
Forgotten, and lips dumb?

Beneath that sober garb
Do vagrant longings ever stir to vex
Your heart with cruel barb?
Do dreams you thought long crushed
Rush full upon you o'er your weakening will
And make your pulses leap with quickening thrill?
What guilty blush is this that stains your cheek?

The scourge, the scourge for one avowed so weak
Till lawlessness is hushed.

Do voices from the throng,
Strange, weird world-voices, ever reach your heart
And still your matin song?
Do you, too, ever seem
To see the better happiness afar
And, when 'tis day, long for the night's pale star,
Then, scarce the night comes, wish the day again?
Your lot is but the common lot of men;
Back to your beads—to dream.

THE GREATER VICTORY.

There was a way, a joy, a mystic, unnamed thing
A dreamer sought—
As vague as air that's troubled by a swallow's
wing—
Ideal, intangible, and shadow-fraught.

Impossible it seemed, so much it held desired,
So much implied,
So near, yet so remote; uncertainty conspired
To make it seem by distance deified.

One day the prize was gained; he struggled
through despair,
Through ways defiled,
To grasp a poisoned cup; the watching world
stood there
And so he pressed it to his lips and smiled.

THE LOVE-PLAINT.

For my love and me
How the robins sang in the greenwood tree,
How the great bell's voice
In the church afar made the hills rejoice
For my love and me.

On the sun-kissed lea,
Where the wanton flower lures the roving bee,
There we rested long,
And the whole world throbbed to the passion-song
Of my love and me.

Ah, my love and me,
How we creep afar lest the world shall see
What my arms enfold ;
O, the way is long and the world is cold
For my love and me.

AT SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO*.

The story runs thus: 'Twas a sabbath morn
So still that no leaf of the tasseled corn
Which weighted the stalks in the neighb'ring field
By rustle or tremor a breeze revealed;
A pastoral scene that was fair to view,
With cattle in clover-flecked fields of dew,
And the sun just touching with burnished gold
San Juan Capistrano, the mission old.

With them that kneel down 'neath its arches, dim,
In the love of their hearts to remember Him
Is she, who, low-bowed in her place of prayer,
Seems shunned by the faithful who gather there;
Bright feminine eyes on her fair face rest,
On her rounded arm and her swelling breast,
And each seems inclined to deny assent
To beauty that sins and is penitent.

Out yonder a silence shrouds copse and hill
And fastens the valley within its thrill;
A ponderous terror that creeps along
And hushes the notes of the thrush's song,

A sullen, intangible, grewsome thing,
The shadow, unseen, of a monster-wing,
That gathers the steeps in its mystic clutch
And palsies the air with mesmeric touch.

The animate harken; the silence speaks;
Back flashes the answer in fear-blanch'd cheeks,
And horrors, half dreamed of, suspended lie
In the beat of the breath and the wid'ning eye;
A rumble, a rending, a power compressed
That tortures the hills with its deep unrest,
A shiver, a pause, then the temblor's hurled
In the white of its wrath on a helpless world.

The mystery gathers within the dell
And hushes the sound of the mission bell,
It razes the stones with its lev'ling rod
And crushes the cries that are raised to God.
No soul, in the chapel, that felt its breath
But rushed to the doors to a frenzied death
Save her who was shunned; lest her faint heart fail
She had knelt, in her faith, at the altar rail.

*When the proud old mission at Capistrano was tumbled by an earthquake the arch over the altar was the only one that stood.

WHEN LOVE BETRAYS.

The banshee frets the night with dismal cry ;
Some twenty times across the wind-swept dune
I've heard it come, now shrill, now scarce a sigh
That floats beneath the weird and pallid moon
Like some dread echo moaning in reply.

Your lover soon will come ; rest yet awhile
Till yonder length'ning shadow darkly dips
And lays its finger on the sleeping dial,
Then wake the heavy silence of your lips
And rouse their languor to a welcome smile.

Who knocks without ? You are impatient, friend,
But eager lover knows not how to wait.
Perhaps your mistress in good time will send
And raise the hopes that droop disconsolate.
Have patience, doors must open, nights must end.

What! Yet again? Could you, beyond the door,
Behold the stillness of this covered thing,
This huddled horror prone upon the floor
And watch the growth of yonder eddying ring
I wonder would you seek admittance more?

How near that cry! Could I have heard aright?
It seemed to live within the very room.
What fiend conspires to fill me with affright?
Vague portents breathe within the murky gloom
And fraught with menace is the sullen night.

What work, what work, to show to-morrow's sun.
O, why, poor weakling, why did you not live
And keep unstained these sands so nearly run?

* * * * *

Now, you without! let Fate her verdict give
What life shall answer for the thing I've done.

THE DREAMER

My way is this: To rest in the shade
Deep in the dusk of some whispering glade
Drowsily happy and satisfied;
Great are the wonders that grow apace
Out of the heart of such hallowed place;
Weird with a theme I may not repeat
Pipes of Pan lull me with music sweet;
Few know the path from the highway wide
To way that is mine, in the shade, aside.

My way is this: Apart from the strife,
Far from the tumult of clamorous life,
Courting the comfort the throng denied,
Having no care when the day is done
If I shall look on to-morrow's sun;
Glad in the light of the thing that seems,
Happy to live in my idle dreams.
This is no highway the world may ride,
This way that is mine, in the shade, aside.

THE WANTON.

I planted a rose in the sandy soil of an
 unkept garden bare,
It fastened its roots down deep in the earth
 and lifted its head in the air,
It flung its arms to the summer's sky and
 opened its heart to the sun,
And seductively pressed its lips to the breeze
 in joy of the deed I had done.

Its crimson heart was as red and sweet as the
 lips of a woman I knew,
And I came to liken the wanton thing to her
 beauty as it grew,
It would blush and pant in the sun's hot ray
 and tremble with sweet delight
As the southern wind pressed warm and close
 to its heart in the sultry night.

It would quiver and bend as the passionate
wind pressed close with hot caress.

And nod and sigh as the bees flew by and
flirt its scarlet dress,

I grew to hate its wanton way, despise its
heart of flame,

Abhor its maddening sweetness, withheld
from none who came.

So I crushed its life in my hand one day, in
passion its roots uptore,

And panting with shame and anger gazed on
my unkept ground once more,

I loudly laughed in savage joy to show the
world my scorn.

But pressed my heart with my bleeding hand
to hide the gash of a thorn.

A WOMAN'S CONSTANCY.

A barren road lies parching in the sun ;
Its drear monotony and tiresome length
Drag on, and threaten never to have done.

I toil along the rough, uneven way
With heart depressed, with face tear-stained and
worn,
And dread the light of each succeeding day.

One morn, when all but sunk beneath my load,
My untaught lips essayed a prayer, and lo,
The light of Calvary shone o'er the road.

No hope but one, the cross. A dream I nursed—
But that is dead. O God, desert me now,
Then chaos is, and I'm indeed accursed.

My dream, a weakling's dream, no more shall fret
My yearning heart. Within the mighty calm
Of yonder sacred cross, I will forget.

Come, subtle essence of a power divine,
Cloak all my senses in thy mystery,
And shield me from all mastery but thine.

* * * * *

Mankind is weak, O God, the steady light
Of Thy great presence awes; so keep me firm
Lest I drift back to sin, and to the night.

My erring heart still pleads and mourns its loss
In silent anguish. Is there no relief
For those who kneel and cry beneath the cross?

Just God, forgive! In vain I've tried to slay
This love within my breast. Take Thou all else
But give me back my dream of yesterday.

* * * * *

Two faces silhouetted in the dawn;
The woman sits and dreams in sweet content;
Her prayer is answered, but the cross is gone.

THE WATER-SPRITE.

All day she lies in a lily's cup,
But late at night when the moon comes up,
Away, away o'er the dimpling lake
To a place she knows in the flow'ring brake
Where perfumes lift from a tangled wild
To thrill the soul of the air-born child,
To overcome with a rare delight
The ravished sense of the water-sprite.

The spot is ringed with a shaded red
Of flow'r-cups, blossoming overhead;
Here waves beat soft on a sanded beach
With lisping murmur, like childhood's speech;
On grasses burnt to a sable brown
She rests as light as a thistle-down,
And moonbeams lost in the pulseless night
Are gathered close by the water-sprite.

The warm air steals from the spice-groved South
To press its kiss on her willing mouth,
And where but promises late arose
She now the joy of fulfillment knows ;
With arms flung wide to the perfume warm,
With wings sunk limp to her melting form
She yields herself to the sweets of night,
Those languorous joys of the water-sprite.

IN MEDITATION.

Though all else fade yet may I always keep
The memory of yesterday; that time
When words were said that made the pulses
 leap,
When good was killed and evil set a-chime,
And every impulse that was virtue-fed
Lay prone. 'Twas then I hid the wound from
 which hope bled,
And made no outward sign when it was dead.

But I've remembered. 'Twixt my God and me
There lives a prayer, a fervid, earnest prayer,
That reaches down through all infinity
And rests where lesser pleas would fear to dare.
When He shall give His ultimate decree,
What will we do, my soul, when He shall say to
 me,
"This day I give to thee thine enemy."

SATIETY.

A man and a woman in sad discontent,
Their hearts dull and heavy, to Cupid's shrine
 went,
And knelt at the altar old, faded and worn,
To pour out the griefs and the wrongs they had
 borne.

Each went there alone, in contrition and dread,
Afraid lest the other should see love was dead,
And shrunk from the scene the denouement
 would make,
And tried to evade it for each other's sake;
They only acknowledged in secret, and shame,
The truth of the tale of the moth and the flame.

"I'm tired," said the man, "'tis the old, selfsame
 play,
The same entre act every night, every day,

The same ceaseless babble, cheap tinsel and gauze,
The same angry words from the same jealous
cause,

The same curtain-raiser, the same curtain call—
I'd give twenty years to be out of it all."

"I'm tired," said the woman, "I kneel to confess
I've wavered and struggled in sore heart distress,
Brought duty to bear on my faltering mind,
But only ephemeral good could I find,
And love lies as cold and as dead as a stone—
I cover the corpse with the hopes I have known."

"I'm tired of it all," said the man with a frown,
The bar to the holy of holies threw down,
And stood there aghast in the dim, sacred place
As he saw in the dusk, silhouetted, a face.
"You here! For what purpose?" he faltering
cried,
"I'm sacking the Temple of Love," she replied,
"I've torn down the idol, depleted the shrine,
Despoiled, desecrated this temple of mine;
The image I thought was pure gold in the past,
I find is but poor imitation at last."

They parted, and traversed their different ways
And thought all forgotten in happier days,
But sometimes unbidden, heart-sick, on the rack,
The thoughts of the man and the woman go back,
And tears and regrets and fond memories crowd
Round a small, broken image with hope for its
shroud.

A YESTERDAY.

There's a land I know,
Its beauties lie
'Neath a tropic sky.
There the cacti grow;
There the red-lipped, sun-kissed cacti grow,
And glow, and glow.

There's a face I know;
Two red lips set
Round a cigarette;
There's a promise low,
There are raven lashes drooping low
O'er eyes that glow.

There's a spot I know;
A face lies white
In the moon's cold light,
And the cacti grow—
And the red-lipped cacti blood-red grow,
And glint and glow.

BE KIND.

If you are kind
Then there will be no need of separate ways,
No painful gathering where tares upraise
Through tears that blind.

Thoughts unconfessed
Although from venom sprung, may harmless fall,
But all their potent power is past recall
When once expressed.

And love lies dead
Sometimes before the heart is yet aware
That mortal wound has been inflicted there
By hard things said.

The pulses start,
And dread alarm through soft emotion creeps,
As hopeless sorrow o'er contentment sweeps
To rouse the heart ;

And when it wakes,
It turns, like one that dreams, from what annoys
And beats awhile to past, remembered joys—
Then slowly breaks.

Be kind, be sweet,
And let our love from such deep source be drawn
That each shall know the other in that dawn
Where next we meet.

THE LOVERS' TRYST.

A swift ebb tide, on the eastern side,

Sweeps in at the Point Del Mar,
For cycles old have the breakers hissed
And swept their spray in a circling mist
O'er a crag that's christened "The Lovers' Tryst."

A wild, bold run that the sea-folk shun,

Crowned high by decaying walls,
That, years ago, were a castle old,
Where dwelt a maid with a heart of gold,
Who lived, and died, for a brigand bold.

* * * * *

The good ship Sue, with her viking crew,

Set sail at the break of day:
All night she'd drowsed to a sweet refrain
Of music, sung by the mighty main,
Whose pulses throbbed at her anchor-chain.

Her listless crew slept the whole night through,
And never a man that stirred,
That is, save one, and he swam to land
To kiss a beautiful maiden's hand,
And nurse a love that was contraband.

And now he stood in his plaid and hood,
And thought of the night gone by :
He thought of love, and a maiden's bed,
And a tender look o'er his features spread
That made a saint's of a pirate's head.

And when his ship, with a flirt and dip,
Swept close to the castle wall,
He bared his head as he hove in sight,
And dipped his flag, in the morning light,
In sweet salute to a form in white.

"Sing ho, sing ho, my aggressive crew,
"We'll toast the lass, and the good ship Sue.
"Both good and steady, and firm and true."
Right well it be if they prove so, too.

A sentinel's face, from its hiding place,
Saw Sue dip the brigand flag,
Then disappeared ; in a moment more
A bugle sounded from off the shore
That made the echoes with challenge roar.

A call to arms, while the sharp alarms
Ring quick 'long the castle walls,
A shot flies swift, o'er the waters blue,
That's answered, quick, by the Viking crew
With an old Long Tom and a thirty-two.

Ha, see ! A bark leaves the fortress, dark,
And speeds for the open sea ;
She cuts the foam as she plows along
In hot pursuit of the pirate throng,
Who flout her sail with a ribald song.

"Sing ho, sing ho, all my viking crew,
"And sing again when your song is through,
"And make the jest that best pleases you."
'Twill be the same in an hour or two.

The pirate crew would have sworn that Sue
 Could distance the Falcon bark,
But big and red in the morning light
The Falcon's beacon forged in sight,
And the viking crew prepared for fight.

Sing ho, sing ho, let your song ring true,
And pipe a note for the Falcon, too,
The lassie's father commands the crew
That rides the waves in pursuit of you.

The light of day saw a bloody fray,
 The deck of the Sue shone red,
Her monkey-gaff was a gallows-tree
That swayed and bent 'neath the corpses, three,
Of pirates, dead as they'll ever be.

The captain stood, in his plaid and hood,
 And wielded his trusty blade ;
The ring of dead he had piled knee-high
At length attracted the searching eye
Of a man in lace who was tacking by.

"You imp of fire," quoth the irate sire.

"Come measure your sword with me :

"Forsooth, I vow by the Sphinx's head,

"That ere the sun grows a deeper red.

"You'll mark your length on a coral bed."

Then quoth the chief: "By Gilmony's Reef,

"It pains me to cut your throat ;

"But I've a tryst with your daughter, fair,

"Which you would spoil, if you lived, I swear,

"So pray to heaven ere you journey there."

On guard ! On guard ! Now, their breath comes hard.

Now, chances would seem a draw ;

The pirate falls, he is up once more,

He stumbles—slips on the bloody floor—

The other's blade spits his heart's red core.

Then o'er the rail, with a lusty hail,

They toppled the brigand bold :

A valiant man, and a brave, I vow.

The father cried: "Will you tell me how

"You'll keep your tryst with my daughter now?"

The answering word by the wind was heard,
But not by the Falcon crew ;
They sung their songs of the bloody fray,
They sailed back home to the fortress gray,
And reached it just at the close of day.

No single star o'er the Point Del Mar
Hung high in the heavens dark ;
The beach lay black, but a grewsome sight
Was shown next day by the morn's rich light—
A maiden robed in a dress of white.

Sing ho, sing ho, for the good ship Sue,
Sing ho, sing ho, for her captain, too ;
He's sung his song, and his song is through,
A long farewell to the viking crew.

A heart of gold, and a brigand bold :
Her arms press his bloody form,
Her cold, dead eyes meet his glassy stare,
Her white lips rest on his sea-swept hair.
Thus ends the tale of this luckless pair.

THE PENALTY.

The song was finished when the maestro said,
"Dream not of fame nor yet of great success;"
Then kindly added, when she drooped her head,
As though reluctant to implant unrest
Within the calm Arcadia of her breast,
"Great gifts like yours from heaven alone are sent."
He saw her hopeful look and sadly smiled;
"Some day you'll know that fame is only meant
"To touch the lives that harbor discontent;
"Success is found through grief and weariness.
"Be loath to leave the path where pleasure lies;
"Joy lives an hour, but sorrow never dies;
"It is the soul of man's dead happiness.
"Ambition is not born of ecstasy;
"When you have suffered, then, come back to me."

THE MEDICI'S NEW YEAR.

Ring on, great jangling bells, your discord's
sweet;

With brazen clanging make the air replete;

I love the music of your metal throats,

I feel the triumph throbbing in your notes;

My heart, a pendulum, keeps rhythmic beat

To every insolence your tongues repeat.

You speak to men but of the New Year's birth;

Of God's good will; of peace upon the earth;

You speak to me a short, exultant word—

My sated hatred drowns as 'tis heard—

You speak of plundered enemies to me,

Of downfall, and of *my* supremacy.

As silence that too long has passive hung

Turns venom in the power upon your tongue,

So has the heart that echoes to your call,

From too long waiting, turned its blood to gall.

LOVE'S LAMENT.

Your threat'ning sound, portentous, blatant, clear,
Proclaims a frenzied anger to my ear;
I laugh—a silent laugh. Your voice to me
Speaks soothingly of strength, and victory.
I dream, in sweet content, above the woe
Of one long hated—a dismantled foe;
And I repeat when your last note is done,
I have prevailed 'gainst barriers—and won!

LOVE'S LAMENT.

Cupid drooped his pinions fair;
“Why thus change my name?” he queried.
Answered maiden, debonair,
In accents wearied:
“Love, put jealousy away,
“Though I change your name, don't sorrow;
“Love is love—though Jack to-day
“And Joe to-morrow.”

ON LAUREL HILL.

How heedless they on Laurel Hill!

 The lark that has lain dumb
With weight of night within his throat,
With darkness silencing each note,
Near bursts his heart with melody
 Now day is come ;
But matin song finds no responsive thrill
In these, the heedless ones, on Laurel Hill.

On Laurel Hill they love the night

 With pale stars overhead,
For when the earth lies dark and cold
White tendrils seem to ease their hold
And give each sleeper freer space

 Within his bed.
What care these silent ones for dawning light
That ever fails to reach them in their night?

Here's name and fame with moss o'ergrown
And white stone sinking lower ;
Each day the city grows apace,
Each day some trav'ler seeks the place
And to himself a homestead takes
To roam no more.
On Laurel Hill each, housed beneath his stone
Like surly hermit, guards his hearth, alone.

MAN'S LOVE.

You say you love me and affirm no hour
Of dark adversity could blight the flower
Of this, your fervent passion ; that no deed
Committed or in embryo would need
Your absolution ; 'twould forgiven be
Before 'twas spoken ; that your constancy
Could never equal find. If you but knew
The errors of a past I hide from you—
'Tis as I thought ! You, shrinking, turn from
me ;
'Tis not myself you love, but purity.

THE BRIDGE.

Here passes the world when the day is done ;
The toiler, released by the coming night,
The child of misfortune, the rich man's son,
And shapes that are born with the waning light.
I loiter again where the discords meet
And list to the hurry of eager feet
Which startles, as louder the noises grow,
The echoes that hide in the dusk below.

No prejudice here ; it receives the great
And misses them not when at last they pass,
Departing like those of a lesser state,
As transient as breath on a looking-glass ;
It welcomes the king with his pageant, proud,
Or sanctions revolt of the maddened crowd
While onward the river in restless throb
Laps in through its arches with feeble sob.

Strange shadows flit here when the throng has
 passed,
Queer wraiths of the quay from the darkness
 sprung,
Things lost on the course where their life is cast
That vanish when dawn is with crimson hung;
These linger, with me, while desire outstrips
The word that hangs pending on phantom lips,
And turn, as with hope, as the silence brings
The theme of the song that the river sings.

MAN'S HERITAGE.

This thing called Life! What care we take to shield
Its little hour. We fume and strut about
Forever watchful lest the light go out
And save us from some torture that it yield.

Proud heritage! As through an open door
Man enters, strides in great inconsequence
And then, protesting, forcibly goes hence,
An atom, lost, upon an unnamed shore.

THE VOICE OF SILENCE.

Not things we say but those we leave unsaid
Discover beauty.
And not by voiced reproof are slack hearts led
But by some vague, unspoken word, each hears,
That pleads for duty.

'Tis not the sounds but silences of life
To which we harken ;
The wave-beats in the sea of daily strife
Raise clouds of sound, with silences between
That light or darken.

Not in effulgence can those joys be found
That flood the senses,
They come but when the day kills clangorous sound
And night, all silent, calms the fevered blood
And rest dispenses.

We lose the theme where eloquence has burned
Nor long regret it—
It was a sound; but who of man has turned
To feel the thrill of silent, breathing art
And can forget it?

When wind-swept storms leave on the shivering
palm
Great tears that glisten,
And rage-rent forces speak within the calm,
What wondrous words are whispered in the ears
Of those who listen.

As after passion comes serene repose,
Calm after flurry,
So, after life comes silence. Ah, who knows
How we shall read the music of the void
To'ard which we hurry?

SATAN'S TOAST.

Here's to sins that ye do and ye wish to do ;
Here's to promises never kept ;
Here's to lips that deny with the morning light
Tender words that they whispered at dead of
night ;
Here's to hearts that have died unwept.

Here's to pages ye seal when the deeds be done ;
Here's to hopes that ye crush and kill ;
Here's to treacheries hidden in love's caress ;
Here's to times that ye're silent lest ye confess ;
Here's to mem'ries that shame, and thrill.

Here's to lips that breathe love when the heart is
dead ;
Here's to all that I claim as mine ;
Here's to ye who repent as the daylight starts
And succumb to your passions when light departs ;
Here's to woman, and love, and wine.

THE BENEDICTION.

Into the night of the world came the word
 "Let there be light ;"
 Trembled each dormant thing when it had heard,
 Burst then from countless throats
 Long-hushed, imprisoned notes,
 Loosed from the night ;
 Gems that had lusterless lain in the gloom
 Radiant shone as shines faith through the tomb
 Blessing the sight ;
 Glory had come
 Breathing its soul into things that were dumb.
 When will the word enter the dark of my empty life,
 Easing my heart of its useless strife,
 Sweeping my soul of its bitter night,
 When will be heard, "Let there be light?"

THE PASSING OF THE TIVOLI.

When man, grown rebellious, relinquished the right
To all things reflecting God's spiritual light,
An angel, in pity, considered the cost,
And music was left him when Eden was lost.

And so, little Tivoli, this is goodbye ;
I make it, old friend, 'twixt a laugh and a cry.
I know by the sigh that will not be repressed
Another will never hold sway in my breast
As you have ; no structure of new-fangled grace
Can blot from my heart this Bohemian place.
I love your old back-breaking, hard seated chairs,
Your quaint, little, dark, nestling boxes up-stairs
Where many a man, under stress of the play,
Has said foolish things he regretted next day.
I love your old stage with its fanciful hue
Of settings, no stage but this queer one ere knew,
And though your drop-curtain is marvelous, quite,

I haven't the heart of a critic to-night,
For all the defects you so frankly reveal
Are lost in the honest regret that I feel.

The Catskills? Why, yes, I have seen them before,
And old Rip Van Winkle tired, weary, and sore;
Hush! Hartman is speaking beneath the disguise
In a way that brings unbidden tears to our eyes.
A weird and incongruous, hurrying throng,
Some singing, some tragic, sweeps blindly along;
Old forms and old faces I view from my stall
Long since praised or blamed by the Critic of All.
I hear distant music that stirs in my breast
A whirlwind of passions, then soothes them to rest;
For music can cleanse, like a chastening rod,
And send the starved soul, pleading, back to its God.
The melody wakes a long slumbering sense
That dies, ere 'tis born, from its own impotence.

What's this? Shadow-faces grow dim, and the show
Is not what it was half a minute ago.
The curtain goes down, and the Tivoli's page
'Twixt the farce of the world and the farce of the
stage

Is finished ; comes silence where laughter has dwelt.
Impatience I may have at other times felt
Is absent to-night. Old Bohemian place,
I make my adieux with a sorrowful face.
Let's walk down your aisle for the last time, and
try
To whisper goodnight, and forget 'tis goodbye.

FOR LOVE OF THE BURDEN.

Should some bright ray of kindly fortune shine
To guide me from this long-familiar way
And fill my cup of gall with sweetest wine—
Should I be shown the victor's shining crown,
Yet sadly would I turn me from today
And with reluctance lay the burden down.

'Tis not possession but pursuit that gives
The charm to conquest, and in distance lies
The beck'ning hope of every soul that lives.
Who turns his face to'ard light that gleams afar
Feels naught of storms that fret the nearer skies
And knows no darkness seeing but the star.

Heights gained but furnish leisure to look back
On mist-enshrouded wrecks that strew the night.
O, let me strive along the tortuous track,
The task before me ever to be done;
O, let me ever know some luring light
And have some goal forever to be won.

"A DIOS."

"A Dios." 'Twas lightly spoken,
Each heart left the other broken,
Without guessing that 'twas so;
Checking tender words that started,
They, like strangers, coldly parted.
"A Dios." Each turned to go.

"A Dios." When love came trembling
Over thirsting lips dissembling,
Then the words they would have said,
Quick were killed in jest and laughter;
But the pain in each heart after,
Proved Love wounded, but not dead.

"A Dios." Is this the ending,
This the sun of love descending
Or the dawn that faintly glows?
Maybe some bright morning, after
Love has conquered jest and laughter,
They will meet again. Who knows?

THE SUICIDE.

What harm should we snuff out this feeble light
And leave the broken thing in which it burns
Rayless and shadowless within the night?
What harm if finally is quenched the spark
And that which men call spirit never turns
In resurrection from eternal dark?

The primitive close-threatens with its rote.
Wherefore we sit enwrapped within our creed
Lest instinct wake to reason's falt'ring note.
Could man go back through artificial years
To ponder symbols held within the seed
Where then the hope now rainbowed through his
tears?

What better light can show on troubled way
Of tired, far-journeying pilgrim, than the thought
That this were all; that there will dawn no day

When he shall rise to lessons strange and new,
When tangled problems shall again be wrought
And other tear-blotched pages copied through.

Dumb things that come upon the way of death
Are helped by such crude art as man may boast
And hastened from the pain of fretful breath;
But man condemns if man thus leaps the goal.
Through fear he tortures, where he loves the most,
Because some night-tale whispers of a soul.

THE PHANTOM.

In heaven's name, what shape art thou,
With threat'ning glance and beetling brow,
That comes with bloodshot eye to dart
A chill of terror through my heart?
Thy tears turn, dripping, into blood
That stains thy front with crimson flood.
Away! I bear thy sight with pain,
Nor dare to break my peace again.
"Not so," it cries, "I'll ever stay
"Beside thee close, each hour, each day,
"And when the grave shall yawn at last
"I'll still be near. I am thy Past."

AN EPISODE.

Her eyes met mine ;
I saw a light, half smold'ring, shine
Within their dusk.
I hoped. Cold grew her glances then
And seemed to speak denial when
Her eyes met mine.

Had it but seemed
Or had I in some fever dreamed
Her eyes spoke love?
Why tremulous her voice and low,
Why seek to hide her cheeks' red glow,
Had it but seemed?

She turned aside.
'Tis well we're given wit to hide
The truth within,
Or else she had to me confessed
The love she stifled in her breast
And turned aside.

HOPE.

Out somewhere from the darkness of the East
Three travelers come ;
Content in what they fail to understand
Each moves across the heat-veiled desert sand
As though he held a chart within his hand ;
Their fervor, by each hardship but increased,
Makes question dumb.

These, strong in forceful trust of some strange
power
To guide aright,
Oft see a vision fill the star-lit wild
Where shine the features of the Virgin, mild ;
They kneel in worship to the King, her child,
And trembling cry, ere comes the natal hour,
"Behold the light!"

HOPE.

Thus, on each barren life there shines some star
 To cheer its night,
Some force deep sprung from sources that will win
Hearts back to hope, although there lies within
But rotting wrecks of glories that have been.
Thus each soul through the darkness finds afar
 The guiding light.

THE SIREN.

Near a spot where the voice of the whispering
 pines
Calls low to the drone of the sea,
Near the buoy that sways to the turbulent roll
Of the surf as it sweeps o'er the crag-breasted
 shoal,
There's a cabin, a tiny, wee bit of a place
That drowsily rests in the cliff's warm embrace,
And the world may not trespass within the con-
 fines
Of its poppy-flecked fields and its clustering vines.

There is life in the breath of the salt-laden spray
That drenches the rocks at its feet,
There is peace in the song of the sea, gay or grave,
And a history lies in the froth of each wave.
And we, of the world, stand aloof, loath to go,
Forgetting awhile the unrest that we know,

Forgetting the power that we bend to obey,
Till we turn, with regret, to the old beaten way.

Here's the infinite peace we have looked for so long,
Here is life freed from trammeling care;
But a voice from afar calls with mystical force
And the yearning we nourish is sapped at its source;
We harken no more to the soul's plaintive cry
But sink back 'neath the spell of the world's Lorelei.
There's no rest for the heart that has thrilled to the
 song
Of the siren that sings in the hum of the throng.

TO MY PIPE.

Come down, old fellow! with shame-bowed head
I take you up from your dusty bed;
I feel regret and a just remorse,
And blame myself and my vapid course,
That I, the dolt, could have put you by
For a maiden's wish and a maiden's sigh.

Come down, old fellow! we meet again;
To-day is not what the day was, when
I thrust you back in the shadows, dim,
In deference to a woman's whim.
No wondrous maid that the world e'er knew
Could chain a man to her heart like you.

Come down, old fellow! What, friend! think you
That any one, now, could part us two?
What fervid kisses from scarlet lips
Could thrill me thus to my finger tips?
Dear, brown, old fellow, I bless the sprite
That gave me freedom, and you, to-night.

THE ROSE.

Light from rubies, caught and held
In each petal. From its bosom
Sweet, seductive perfume welled.

Careless, winged a butterfly,
Passes near the siren's beauty,
Loiters, trembles—flutters by.

Wheeling on uncertain wing
Back he flies, now unresisting—
Back to woo; to love; to cling.

He, replete with love, ne'er guessed,
Yesterday the bee was fondled
Close within that scarlet breast,

That to-morrow would be heard,
Not unwillingly, the pleading
Of impassioned humming-bird.

WHAT KING?

What king have we to-day ; the one whose blood
Dark-stained the aspen cross of Calvary
That man might be regenerate through its flood?

Or build we temples underneath His stars
For worship of the hour's divinity
And bend the knee to Plutus, Bel, and Mars?

Each glade an altar hides, each rock a shrine,
Rare incense swings to Venus, as of old,
Through cannon's mouth is Odin spake divine.

Great Bacchus still beneath his vine sits crowned
Dispensing comfort to these followers
On whom all other oracles have frowned.

Unstable as the gods to whom they pray
Men kneel, low-bowed ; each dawn comes question-
ing,

“What king does man go forth to crown to-day?”

THE POPPY.

Once a poppy grew
(If the tale be true)
On a hillside bare;
And two wooers bold
For her heart of gold
Fought a battle there.

Now, the Sun and Dew
Were the good knights true
Of this fickle one;
And with lance of light
Put the Dew to flight,
Did Sir Knight, the Sun.

Then the victor passed
With the day, at last,
To his home and rest.

And the vanquished lay
In the twilight gray
On the loved one's breast.

When a new day dawned,
Though her lovers fawned,
She was coy and shy
And she looked far down
On the distant town
With a longing eye.

“Could I feel and know
All its life and show
'Twould be sweet, in truth.”
Like an answered prayer
She was carried there
By a careless youth.

Then the sun went down
On the hill and town,
And the poppy sweet,
Lay all soiled and torn,
All forgot, forlorn,
On the crowded street.

THE POPPY.

Then the dew came down
On the hill and town,
But the poppy, tossed
In the swirl and strife
Of a larger life
Had been crushed and lost.

LOVE'S SPAN.

The fleecy clouds in the heavens high
Beneath the light of an opal sky
 Showed tints of morn ;
The blush that over the landscape lay
Spoke tender hopes for a glorious day,
 When love was born.

The sun's caress woke the slumb'ring glade
And turned the light to a deeper shade
 On brook and mound,
No sign betrayed in the glowing west
The storm-cloud trembling with dark unrest,
 When love was crowned.

The world was hushed when the sun went down ;
It left the sky 'neath its threat'ning frown
 An angry red,
And hope went out with the dying light
As day gave place to a starless night—
 When love was dead.

BESIDE THE BIER.

Poor, cold, dead face; poor lips that weakly part.
Irresolute, unchanged. The tear-drops start
And shame the angry sorrow at my heart.

Before they came, before the word was said,
Before the watchers hovering round your bed
Were yet aware, I knew that you were dead.

How? How do captives know their chains are gone?
How know the wounded that the barb's withdrawn?
How does the darkness know of coming dawn?

You were the millstone of uncertain fate;
Down, inch by inch, I sunk beneath the weight
Till I was crushed, despairing, desolate.

I do not blame. If, from eternity,
You may look back, I hope that it will be
To learn how much you might have been to me.

THE ROSE OF MONTEREY.

This the story: In a valley
Steeped within perpetual sunshine,
In a tropic, sun-kissed valley
Dwells a dark-eyed senorita:
Traces still of regal beauty
Lie upon her aged features.

Long ago the wand'ring sunlight
In its course o'er dell and river,
Ling'ring near the land of roses,
Saw a sad and bitter parting,
Saw a tender heart grow heavy
With uncertain premonition,
Saw bright eyes unused to weeping
Dimmed with tears they could not master.
"I will soon return," he whispered,
" 'Wait me here, I'll not forget you;
"Take this pure-white rose and plant it
" 'Neath the shadow of your window,

“Let it be the sacred emblem
“Of the love we hold and cherish;
“When you see its first fair blossom,
“When you smell its sweet, faint perfume
“I shall be here close beside you,
“Hold you in my arms and kiss you,
“Evermore we’ll be together.”
With these words he turned and left her,
Left her to her hopes and longings,
To her dreams and sweet illusions.

Many years the glowing sunshine
Has been seen upon the sun dial;
Many years the rose has blossomed;
Many years its subtle fragrance
Has been known to summer zephyrs,
And the dark-eyed senorita
Tends it—hoping, trusting, waiting.
But, ’tis said, the waxen petals
Pure and faultless in their beauty,
White at first, as any moonbeam,
Now lie red beneath the sunshine,
Faultless still, but red as rubies,
Red as blood that marks the pulse-beat
In the heart of one forsaken.

IN LOTUS LAND.

Let me live within my dreams;
The joys I know
From shadows grow;
Transient lights from nothing burning
Back to nothing swift returning;
Life can hold no happiness like that which seems.

Let me love and then forget;
Each vintage sip
With careless lip;
Drain the cup and then destroy it,
Hold no memories to cloy it;
I would have no dark remorse to chill and fret.

Let me keep my altar fires
Bright with incense from elusive, vague desires—
Flames well fed;
Flouting fate, cajoling sorrow,
Heedless if a sad to-morrow
Find me dead.

TO JESSICA.

True to my soul as the steel to the pole
You have been to me ever.
Evil has thrilled me
And sorrow has chilled me
Grief and regret for a wasted life filled me;
You have been near me
To comfort, to cheer me,
Bound firm and fast by a tie none can sever,
Close to my soul.

When we are dead and the last word is said
We will still be together.
Fear that I'd lose you
Has made me abuse you,
Sully your life that your God might accuse you;
Sin has engrossed you
And Heaven has lost you
That I might have you and hold you forever,
Living or dead.

WHICH DOES NOT MATTER TO YOU.

A youth swore love for a maiden fair,
 (Which does not matter to you),
He placed a rose in her auburn hair
And laid his head on her shoulder fair
And promised freedom from every care,
 (Which does not matter to you.)

And like the tale of a minstrel's rhyme,
 (Which does not matter to you),
He left his home for a certain time
And sought for wealth in a foreign clime
And found it—owned by a maid sublime,
 (Which does not matter to you).

And time went on just as time will do,
 (Which does not matter to you),
The maiden wept for a day or two
Because her lover had proved untrue

Then patched her heart with connubial glue,
(Which does not matter to you).

And after that the report was spread,
(Which does not matter to you),
That youth and maid put in earthy bed
The cold remains of their spouses dead
And hid a smile with the tears they shed,
(Which does not matter to you).

Above the graves they had met again,
(Which does not matter to you),
They whispered things about "might have
been"

Which I consider a cardinal sin
Remembering the place they were talking in,
(Which does not matter to you).

And then, one day, it was told to me,
(Which does not matter to you),
These twain were one; now they both agree
That "Was" was nearer felicity
Than "Is," and sigh for the "Used To Be,"
(Which does not matter to you).

And thus it is with the things we crave,
 (Which maybe matters to you),
We fret and worry and toil and slave
We reach and struggle, and terrors brave,
Then scorn the object our efforts gave,
 Which is very much like you.

THE PAST.

The past? Ah, question not, dear love,
 Nor jealous be;
The past was but a time when I
 Awaited thee.
Ask not to have the present chilled
 By retrospect;
The past was but a rock submerged
 Where hopes were wrecked.
The past was but a fretful time
 In which I grew,
By sorrow's scourge, a helpful mate
 And fit for you.

THE VOICE OF NATURE.

From the flush of strange beginning beauty
on the earth has lain,
Glorified in flaming sunset, fairy-gemmed
in crystal rain,
Lessons, rare, of radiant splendor are in wild
profusion shown
While we gaze in big-eyed wonder like to
babes in dumbness grown.

Dormant standing, deep-enamored of the
spell, with senses swooned,
Keenly strung to vibrant music only heard
of hearts attuned,
Helpless in our deep emotion, speechless
where we would reveal,
Vain the fettered tongue endeavors to por-
tray the thing we feel.

Frail we are in understanding when our
 sleeping souls awake,
Conscious of but futile effort through the
 halting flights we take.
Masterful the changing story told in yellow
 leaf and sear,
Wondrous is the swelling anthem known to
 him who will but hear.

Call him sculptor who in marble clothes the
 song his heart has heard,
Call him poet who from Nature has pre-
 served one throbbing word,
Each attempts to paint the glory of the thing
 as it is shown
But he ever mars the picture by crude touches
 of his own.

TO TOMBSTONE II.

(THE PRESS CLUB'S CAT.)

Thy gaze, transfixed, disdains my presence, small,
And lingers on creations of thine own ;
The twitching of thy lip betrays the strange
And startling wonders of thy retrospect.
Perchance these walls give place to jungle briars,
And curious gapers turn to hunted prey?
Perchance within thy reminiscent brain
Lurk dreams of summer nights when stealthy forms
Cast undulating shadows 'neath the moon?
I think 'tis so; despite thy stolid mien,
A sudden light burns green within thine eyes,
Ferocious hate leaps high as thought recalls
How mortal cunning wrought thine impotence.
By means unworthy living thing, save man,
They have thee caged, and harmless, by a trick.
They took thy body captive, but thy pride
Remains thine own, and clothes thy haughty form
In solemn garb of peerless majesty.
I gaze at thee and feel my littleness,
And slink away, ashamed that man presumes
From his conceit, to call himself thy lord.

DREAMS.

Lips there are that crave the touch of lips
they may not press,
That laugh above the heart's dead weight of
hopeless weariness,
That sometimes paler grow beneath the
starved soul's futile cry
And tremble with the fervor of desires that
will not die.

Hands, there are, press other hands but love's
wild thrill is dead,
Lips speak to lips but hearts no more are
reached by what is said,
There come fleet dreams, like transient mist,
of joys that fate withholds,
And longings of such bitter pain that hope-
lessness consoles.

No rose so red but fragrance from one redder
 blows afar,
No night so fair but that another shows a
 brighter star,
Old wines we crave but old love sometimes
 fails the one athirst;
No virtue breathes in constancy when
 vagrant dreams are nursed.

RETROSPECTUS.

Live not in musty retrospect, but try
To find the rift within the clouded sky,
And let the cold, dead past in shadow lie—
 Lot's wife looked back.
Come, pour libations, bid the minstrel play,
To-day shall question not of yesterday,
To-morrow shall know nothing of to-day.

WHO PAYS?

Who is it that pays
For the words that are uttered in careless jest,
For the vows that are soon forgotten,
For happiness stirring the vagrant breast,
For the slight of the lips that were once caressed,
For the unfulfilled hopes and the sad delays?
Some one pays!

Who is it that pays
For the faith that is held at the joyous start
Of a love that is quickly ended?
Who dreams that the debt of a truant heart
Will not have to be met, in its smallest part,
Will but find that whenever the piper plays
Some one pays.

Who is it that pays
For the glitter and sparkle of Vanity Fair,

For the pomp and the vulgar showing?
One half of the world must their muscles bare
That a few of the favored may feel no care—
For their languorous nights and their useless days,
Some one pays.

Who is it that pays
When the 'frighted hills echo a battle cry
And strange dew on the grass is shining?
A trumpet of death is a monarch's sigh,
But new subjects are born while the old ones die.
Be it he who is slain or the one who slays
Some one pays.

RECOMPENSE.

Before me dead you lie ; your still, white face,
Impassive neath my glance,
Lies strangely patient in its resting place,
Nor marks the night's advance.

Alone, we two ; no ling'ring pulse-throbs start
Or quiver at my touch.
I could not hold such hate within my heart
Had I not loved so much.

I'd gladly die could I but break your rest
And bring you back to men,
That I might plunge this dagger in your breast
And watch you die again.

A PARADOX.

Had you listened when I pleaded,
Had you paused or hesitated
Or one wish of mine conceded,
Had a wave of weakness crossed you—
Had you yielded—I had lost you.

Yours was not an easy trial;
Evermore I'll hold you dearer
For your words of proud denial;
Had your duty less engrossed you,
You were mine and I had lost you.

In the dead and sodden embers
Where lie passions long forgotten,
Such a love a man remembers.
'Mid the ruins lying scattered
Stands one idol still unshattered.

A SPANISH SERENADE.

Come to thy casement, love, let me behold thee ;
Night will be sweeter, far, if thou but linger near.
Soft sings the nightingale, sings near thy window,
Telling his mate of love, passionate, sincere.
Queen of my life, let me repeat his story,
Close not thy heart, O, do not turn away,
Bid me but hope, 'twill fill the night with glory ;
Be thou my queen, let me, thy slave, obey.

Love is an ember that we should keep glowing ;
Do not destroy the spark from which the flame is
 fed,
For naught shall give it life once it has perished,
E'en lips like thine cannot revive it when 'tis dead.
Then fill the time with joys for which I'm sighing ;
Close in thine arms my exile I'd forget,
Give me thy lips, no sweets they hold denying,
Lest in some sad to-morrow we regret.

There's not a flower but knows the love I cherish,
There's not a breeze but whispers, dear, of thee,
Come, pluck the rose of life, now, ere it perish;
Share thou its rich perfume, this night, with me.

LOVE'S ENEMY.

"Invulner'ble my armor is,"
 Dan Cupid proudly said;
Doubt heard, quick loosed a poisoned dart
 And little Love fell dead.

"GIVE! GIVE!"

The cry of need, and the cry of greed,
Is the cry that is heard afar,
Is the cry that has run since the world was begun
From the ether-rimmed earth to the governing sun
And has trembled from star to star;
The unequal strife in the struggle for life
Has embittered the upright soul,
And the god of the purse is the god that we curse,
While we bow to him, hip and jowl.

This cry is hurled round a purse-proud world,
Nor is hushed by the helping hand.
Who relieves those in need for the love of the deed
Coaxes censure like that for a singular creed
We come never to understand.
The cry that will live is the fierce cry of "Give!"
Hear the multiple echoes roll!

Though the god of the purse is the god that we
 curse,
Yet we bow to him, hip and jowl.

This cry upraised to the god that's praised
Is unchecked by the touch of death,
And the soft word that slips through the child's
 coaxing lips
Is the word that is voiced by the wanton who strips
With the blight of her vampire breath.
The loves that we know and the follies we show
Are forgiven, if full the bowl;
Though the god of the purse is the god that we
 curse,
Yet we bow to him, hip and jowl.

WHEN PASSES THE FLAME.

Today you are most kind,
But kindness, now, seems only anger's cloak;
Your looks are gentle yet I fail to find
That joy they once awoke.

Today you clasp my hand
And speak soft nothings in my passive ear;
I listen but I do not understand;
My heart has failed to hear.

True love will not abide
Where inclination has to custom grown,
And now when thus you linger at my side
I am as one alone.

The ember, lying gray,
May be revived although its flame be sped,
But who of mortal man can find the way
To fire the spark that's dead?

ON THE LITTLE SANDY.

Just within the mystic border of Ken-
tucky's blue grass region
There's a silver strip of river lying idly in
the sun,
On its banks are beds of fragrance where the
butterflies are legion
And the moonbeams frame its glory when
the summer day is done.

There's a little, rose-wreathed cottage nest-
ling close upon its border
Where a tangled mass of blossoms half con-
ceals an open door,
There's a sweet, narcotic perfume from a
garden's wild disorder,
And the jealous poppies cluster where its
kisses thrill the shore.

From across its dimpled bosom comes the
half-hushed, careful calling

Of a whippoorwill whose lonely heart is
 longing for his mate,
And the sun aslant the sleepy eyes of fox-
 gloves gently falling
Tells the fisherman out yonder that the hour
 is growing late.

From the branches of the poplars a spas-
 modic, sleepy twitter
Comes, 'twould seem, in careless answer to
 the pleading of a song,
And perhaps the tiny bosom holds despair
 that's very bitter
For his notes are soon unheeded by the little
 feathered throng.

Then the twilight settling denser shows a
 rushlight dimly burning—
Ah, how well I know the landing drowsing
 'neath its feeble beams,
And my homesick heart to mem'ries of the
 yesterday is turning
While I linger here, forgotten, with no solace
 but my dreams.

IF YOU HAD KNOWN.

If you had known
That 'neath my glance indifferent, the seeds
Of love were sown,
Would you so brief have held
My proffered hand
Within your own?

If you had guessed
The thrill of passion that your touch awoke,
Would you have pressed
My hand in careless mood,
Or clasped me close
Unto your breast?

THE BURDEN.

Within the temple purple windows threw
Their solemn light athwart the silent aisles,
And length'ning shadows into twilight grew;
Still Zarick knelt, unwilling to depart,
So heavy was the sorrow at his heart.

"Great Oracle," he cried, "behold my grief,
"I sink beneath the burden of my life;
"O, guide me to some haven of relief.
"No man of woman born can know the stress
"That I endure from utter wretchedness."

"Go search the world," a solemn voice replied,
"And give thy life in full exchange for one
"That thou may'st choose; thou shalt not be denied."
In fervent thanks he lifted up his voice,
And joyfully went forth to make his choice.

The Eastern sun full many seasons rolled
Across the spice-breathed air of Orient shores;
Full many months the temple bells were tolled,
Yet Zarick came not; then, one solemn night
An old man knelt beneath the altar light.

“Great One,” he said, “I’ve searched through hut
and hall,
“And found no man untouched by sorrow’s breath;
“My burden was the lightest of them all;
“No space o’erlooked, no road but I have trod
“And all have suffered, all have kissed the rod.”

JOHN BRADFORD'S PRAYER.

John Bradford stood at the entrance gate of
a jail in Ludlow Square;
He saw a man led forth to die, and he offered
up a prayer.

He offered up, for himself, a prayer, as but
pious people can
Who follow rules of the cloth and creed, did
this conscientious man.

He offered up for himself a prayer 'neath the
archway drear and dim,
And thanked the Lord that another man was
to die instead of him.

He used the harassing circumstance of the
checkered life near run
To call to notice his godliness, and to draw
comparison.

He laid the list of his Christian deeds in the
Master-Hand on high,
But not a word was there said for him who
was going forth to die.

He prayed so much of his own affairs, and
they took so long to tell,
The hangman's key to the great unknown
set ajar the gates of hell.

And thus a soul sped its way unchecked by
an interceding prayer,
While Bradford muttered his mummary, to
his God, in Ludlow Square.

LOVE'S FALLACIES.

It is not in the glare of the noonday glare
That the red of the wine invites ;
We must borrow the grace of the time and place
To give color to soft delights.

It is not in the heat of the crowded street
That we seek for the shaded pool,
We would travel in vain o'er the burning plain
For the gush of the fountain cool.

Eyes that seem to us bright by the candle's light
May but commonplace be and dim,
And the lips we think red have their beauty sped
When removed from the glass's rim.

Though we know that the smile which we hold
awhile
Is but dross of a base alloy,

Yet we marry false sighs to unblushing lies
And then christen the offspring "Joy."

But, O, never believe that we once deceive
Or once satisfy, e'en in part
By the shadows that pass with the empty glass,
The deep call of the yearning heart.

MY PLEA.

When God's good angel sadly questions me
As to my fitness for eternity,
I'll say you loved me, and when that is done
My sins will be forgiven, and heaven won.

A PICTURE.

Gray the sky ; the earth was gray :
Smoke from sacrificial altar,
Darkly heavy, trailed away.

Near the shrine a woman stood,
And, as incense to Ambition,
Burned the wealth of womanhood.

Desolate to heart and eye ;
Not a trace of color trembled
'Neath the grayness of the sky.

* * * * *

Near the work the artist stood.
"What is this?" at last I ask her,
"Why portray such solemn mood?"

Stilling then an inward strife,
With dispassion born of patience,
"This," she answers, "is my life."

In my glance deep passion glows,
And upon the sacred altar
Quick I paint a scarlet rose.

* * * * *

Long the rose of scarlet lay
On the altar of Ambition,
Flushing red the sky of gray.

Tired, one day, and callous grown,
She, with brush annihilating,
Gave Ambition back its own.

But the cruel hand, 'tis said
Hesitating in its firmness,
Left behind a blush of red.

THE ROAD OF A GREAT DESIRE.

There are bridges, once crossed, that 'twere wise
to burn

On the road of A Great Desire,
There are havens of rest that 'twere well to spurn,
There's the touch of a hand we may not return;
Place all longings, save one, on Ambition's pyre
Ye who travel the road of A Great Desire.

There are faces so young and with hearts so old
On the road of A Great Desire,
In their eyes lie the shadows of hopes untold;
Though the pulses beat swift yet the blood is cold,
For they know but the lust of Ambition's fire
They that travel the way of A Great Desire.

There's a shrine bathed in warmth of the world's
caress
On the road of A Great Desire,

It is reached through the valley of Weariness
And the god of the temple is called Success;
Lay the dreams you have known on its altar fire
Ye who've traveled the way of A Great Desire.

LOVE'S RECOMPENSE.

The angry billows lash the seam-marked face
Of yonder whitening, bleak, sea-girdled rock;
A thousand storms have swept its rugged form;
It stands impervious to stress and shock.

No jagged hurt that ever scarred its sides
But seemed a privilege, made doubly blest,
Were it endured to shield the cherished life
Of that frail lichen clinging to its breast.

TO MY BOOKS.

Old friends, your pardon. I am come again
Back from the social littleness of men
Contrite and deeply shamed that I was lured,
And roundly punished by the pain endured.

From out some vanity of mine it grew,
Dread wastes of empty words I've floundered
through,
Deceived in false supports at which I caught,
To sink at last 'neath seas of vacuous thought.

If mental suffering can shrive the sin
Of seeking social paths to wander in
Then I was blameless scarce the way was won
And stood forgiv'n, with every penance done.

How peaceful here: You stand in silent row
Reflecting back the firelight's genial glow

In wealth of welcome you so well express
Which not to feel would be to love you less.

No more, old friends. I know man tends to good
'Neath mem'ry of fresh sufferings withstood,
And scarce I blame you that you wink and leer
At one who sought the world when you were near.

LOVE'S VICTORY.

"I want you to hold me and prize me again,
 "Why spurn me now?" Love cried.
"I go to lay siege to the Castle of Fame,
 "Where you may not abide."

With sweet, curly head bowed in petulant grief,
 With bright eyes filling fast,
He saucily said, "Though you send me away,
 I'll victor be, at last."

One day, from the heights of the Castle I gazed
 O'er hopes that used to be,
O'er years that were dead; then my heavy heart
 said,
 "Give Love the victory."

A CAROL.

Sing, thou, with all thy harmony of voice,
Let not one throat be dumb,
Lift up thy drooping spirit and rejoice
For lo, the King is come!

Lay all thy motives bare; beneath the sun
His scepter is thy deeds,
And every kind and generous action done
His throne from which He pleads.

There's joy in every theme, though sadly shown;
Man's pity did but gloss
That greatest ecstasy the world has known,
The sorrow of the cross.

From world to world stirred pulses that were still,
Where suns had ceased to shine;

All chaos was, 'neath that melodious thrill,
Made cosmic and divine.

No distant space that failed to understand
This passion of the Lord,
Futurity was circled by His hand
In one great master-chord.

Sing! Sing! Through all the morning of thy life,
And sing to greet its night;
He finds the harmony within the strife
Who reads life's score aright.

Learn from the cognate universe thy song;
Thrice blessed he who hears
And understands the cadence that has long
Swung rhythmic round the spheres.

THE VOYAGERS.

With oars at rest, content to drift, and dream,
Responsive swinging where each current sets,
One idles down the bosom of the stream
With will of waves no issue to dispute,
With helm long dropped from hands irresolute.

Another craft upon the river rides,
Fast sweeping on beneath each steady stroke,
With helm hard set against the changing tides ;
It braves the tortured night, the wind-swept day,
Forever keeping on its charted way.

To float among the lilies near the shore,
And build brave plans to reach the harbor lights
Should danger threaten in the tempest's roar,
No broken oars, no muscles strained and tired.
Ah, surely this were way to be desired.

A cloud o'ershades the red, low-drooping sun.
Of him who bared his strong arms to the work
The storm-gods tell that port was bravely won.
Of him who dreamed and drifted? Ask the night
Where now the mast that held his puny light.

IN RETROSPECTION.

Could I turn back all the leaves of life,
Correct the blunders and soothe the strife;
Could I blot out every dark deed done,
Make good each triumph unjustly won;
Could I live free from the faults of men,
I would not. Living my life again,
I'd do each deed as I did it then.
This life were surely a tiresome page
If man, arriving at sour old age,
Have nothing braver to grace his bier
Than a prudent life and a just career.

DON'T WORRY.

Though not one of your fanciful schemes comes to
light,

Don't you worry ;

You have had the fond pleasure of thinking they
might,

So don't worry.

Though the page is all blotted and thumb-marked
and torn,

There's a God up above who has seen what you've
borne,

And who tempers the wind to the lamb that is
shorn,

So don't worry.

Though the bauble you longed for looks cheap in
your hand,

Don't you worry ;

Though you sink where you thought it was a
solid land,

Don't you worry.

Like the baby, you see the sun's glint on the wall,
And you struggle to clasp it—you stumble, and fall;
Then you find you have gathered a shadow—that's
all—

But don't worry.

Though the play is played out and the curtain's rung
down,

Don't you worry;

Though the features of life wear a turbulent frown,

Don't you worry.

Though the other man wins, and you lose, in the
race,

Don't you let the world know: put a smile on your
face;

There are always your pistols up there in their case.

So don't worry.

•

THE PESSIMIST.

There is no rose on the broad, bleak earth
Worth the labor put forth to raise it;
No scarlet mouth, framed in dimpling mirth,
Worth the breath that it takes to praise it.

There is no song like the one that's heard
In the time of a life's beginning;
No woman's love worth the empty word
That we waste in its useless winning.

There is no day with its sordid strife
Worth the serious thought we give it,
No passing hour in a careless life
Worth the trouble it takes to live it.

Yet pluck the rose while you chance to live,
Hold your pleasures as you may find them,
Forget, in joys that those red lips give,
The grin of the skull behind them.

TO-DAY'S ROYALIST

I'd like to have lived in the time of Queen Bess,
When duels and battles were rife,
When swords were the popular form of redress,
And insults were paid for with life;
I'd like to have lived when the commoner dwelt
Apart, in a world of his own;
Have died ere the time that he voiced what he felt
And placed his own spawn on the throne.

I'd like to have felt the self-satisfied thrill
Unlimited power can afford;
I'd like to have lived when a gentleman's will
Was urged at the point of his sword,
Instead of to-day when "Equality's" rule
Puts "Rights" in the mouths of the clan,
When works of the sage can be jeered by the fool,
When master's no better than man.

I'd like to have lived when the ermine embraced
None other than royalty's form;
I'd like to have lived before caste was effaced
Beneath the mob's leveling storm;
I'd like to have lived when the form of restraint
Held commonwealth under the man,
And felt what it was to be free from the taint
Of "Liberty's" plebiscite ban.

WOMAN.

Believe that yonder stony-hearted shore
Will spare the ship blown thither by the gale;
Believe there's mildness in the ocean's roar
And gentleness within the tempest's wail;
Believe that tigers, thirsting after blood,
Belie their stripes and let their victims go,
But ne'er believe when comes misfortune's flood
That woman will to woman mercy show.

Wolves fraternize when bent upon attack,
Their hunting cry holds no discordant note,
They face a common danger, back to back
Then, true to nature, tear each other's throat;
And not alone on heath and wooded strip
Does this, the law of fang, aggressive loom;
Wolves, wrapped in velvet, rend with thirsting lip
And wage their wars in every drawing-room.

To breed dissension is in woman born :
But some this primal instinct turn aside,
Affecting charms more suited to adorn
And 'neath conceits true inclinations hide.
To seem the thing she's not is woman's care,
No soul of them from this may stand exempt,
And none to be her own true self may dare
Lest she be named an object of contempt.

Debarred by nature from those rough pursuits
That outlets are to savagery, each turns
To rend the other, recking not the fruits
Of slander and the consequence it earns.
O, sooner will be found the drop of rain
When once 'tis lost within the river's flow,
O, sooner shall the hilltop kiss the plain
Than woman shall to woman mercy show.

THE GRANDEST THING.

When hope was young and my blood ran rife,
When homage sweetened the cup of life

And pride was a flame well fed,
They asked me what was the grandest thing
That life could hold or a fortune bring;
As quick as flashes a swallow's wing

"To conquer men," I said.

But now the pale of the after-glow
Reflects the chastening years of woe,

Endurance bows my head;
"Come, tell us now, for we ask again,
The grandest, holiest task of men,"
Submission prompting where pride had been—

"To conquer self," I said.

THE PUNISHMENT.

Ben Omi stood, with drooping head,
To hear the final judgment read
By him who kept the record ;
The accusations 'neath his name
Recounted deeds for serious blame—
A thumb-marked page and checkered.

“Your sins are great,” the angel cried,
“I know of none who ever died
“So quite unfit for glory ;
“No punishment that e'er was writ
“Could shrive your soul and make it fit
“For even purgatory.

“And yet—methinks I'll improvise
“And name a penalty, unwise,
“But most intensely human ;
“'Tis this: Go back to earth and men,
“Resume the flesh, be born again,
“And be, this time, a woman !”

THE PRAYER.

Lord, God, hear Thou a suppliant. Abject,
All crimson-stained, I cringe, lest Thou, in wrath
At my presumption, raise Thy mighty hand
And crush the worm that dares to lift its head
In quiv'ring fear to Thine omnipotence.
The years Thou gav'st I've drunk like honeyed wine,
In eager grasp to burning lips and heart
I've pressed the sweets of life, and drained the
dregs
Of every worldly pleasure. Lord, I dare—
Yea, I! a lep'rous thing—the crawling things
Of earth of which art 'shamed—I, dare to come
Before Thy face.

Lord, God, hear Thou a suppliant. Outcast,
World-weary, broken hearted, losing all
I turn to Thee. . . .

What's this I've dared to say?

Great One, be blind and deaf, that I may snatch
This blasphemy from out the Great Beyond
And plunge it back within my withered heart
To mock its human selfishness. I turn,
A thing all foul within, unfit for hell,
A pigmy that infects Thy universe,
I turn to Thee when all is lost—Just God!
I wonder Thou hast spared so vile a thing
To soil Thy name.

Emblazon all my sins; none can there be
To equal this most human infamy.

When once again a suppliant I come,
'Twill be to ask if any good deed done
Can blot from out the angel's record-page
This prayer. Amen.

OF THE NANCY PRYNE.

Under the deck of the Nancy Pryne
The captain sits with his flask of wine,
A pirate bold and a pirate true
With a dirk and a sword that would do for you
A great deal more than you'd want it to.

He drinks a toast to the surging brine,
This captain bold of the Nancy Pryne,
Nor hears the shock of the wind and rain.
"I buried him deep," comes the loud refrain
Of the song he sings in a minor strain.

The captain drowzes above his wine
Nor feels the lash of the stinging brine;
The wind moans low in the tortured dark
And the struggle ends for the straining bark
In a bit of wreck and some corpses stark.

This story's trite but the fault's not mine,
'Tis all that's known of the Nancy Pryne;
Next morn the song of the sun-kissed main
Called forth the gulls that had sheltered lain;
"I buried him deep," was its low refrain.

BLINDNESS.

From sire to sire for such long cheerless time
Have we accepted tears as heritage,
And dol'rous droned through lengths of ancient
rhyme

With ceaseless sorrow for unchanging theme,
That life has come to be a weary page
And joy the phantasm of a fevered dream.

So long have wrappings of unyielding gloom
Close-swathed the heart, that we resent the word
Which pleads for happiness this side the tomb.
For us no note of earth must vibrant rise;
For us the nearer music to be heard
Is lost in seeking that of distant skies.

We call him pagan who in gladness strips
From glowing truth the dull, dogmatic sheath,
And kisses pleasure full upon the lips;

We call him Christian who embraces care,
Who hunts the thorns to weave in crowning
wreath—
For heaven more fit if girded by despair.

We leave the brilliant substance for the wraith,
And deem him sainted by conjoint acclaim
Who wears a smileless face in show of faith.
Like mewling children, of the dark afraid,
We cling to crude supports, abstruse and lame,
And keep to doleful covenants, self-made.

When will the sons of men, as one agreed,
Consent to read the word that shines above
Unbound by dwarfing hindrances of creed?
When will the fallacies to which we cling
Be merged in one great universal love?
When will we say "The Father," not "The King?"

THE AWAKENING.

I loved a man; the image fair
Of all the good the world contained
I pictured him. From out my heart
The essence of a love divine
I poured upon my rose-decked god,
And sin by sin I sacrificed
Myself upon his altar.
One day impoverished, abashed
Before my idol's face I stood,
And whispered low that all I had
To give was given: My woman's heart
Beat gently sweet, I raised my eyes,
And lo! upon that perfect brow
Satiety sat wearily.

AN OLD LETTER CASE.

On your surface, old and tattered,
Rest small cupids, ink-bespattered,
Clasp is gone and lock is shattered.

Faintly, as I lift the cover,
Perfume seems to rise and hover
Close, like words of some old lover.

Tired, or fearful of derision,
Here a hand has, with precision,
Struck a name from curious vision.

Had you voice would words be teeming
Of a love that proved but seeming,
Idle hope and foolish dreaming?

Old the story, old the sorrow,
Nothing new of love we borrow,
True to-day and false to-morrow.

Quaint old box, how reads your story?
Fancies crowd, and tinge with glory
Life that was ere you grew hoary.

Leather worn and satin tattered,
Cupids, roses, ink-bespattered—
Like your owner's dreams—all shattered.

COMPANIONS.

We two; with no rival to come between
To the death of your ruddy fire;
I have you and my book and an easy chair,
And the pictures you paint for me over there;
And no maid that ever the world has seen
Can mar the peace that we share, I ween;
Myself, and my old black brier.

What secrets we have and what hopes divide
And what sprites of the past invoke!
There are shades of forgotten and dead desire,
There are lips that e'en rival your scarlet fire,
And the coal that presses your blackened side
Seems not more real than the forms that glide
Through haze of your curling smoke.

We two; with a book and an easy chair
And the cheer of a glowing fire!

With the peace of your comradeship all about,
With the noise and the stress of the world shut out,
We can scoff at sorrow and smile at care
And dream of deeds that the bravest dare ;
Myself, and my old black brier.

I THANK THEE.

For fortitude to turn harsh words aside ;
For force of will to humble stubborn pride ;
For strength of heart to bear the biting scorn
And arrogance of one beneath me born ;
For power to hide the hate within my breast ;
For outward calm to mask a mind distressed ;
For dogged patience to abide the time
When I could claim revenge as wholly mine.
Yes, gratefully, I render thanks to Thee
For power, at last, to crush my enemy.

TO MANUELA.

Mañana? No. The light that's speaking
In your eyes
Is the answer I am seeking.

Mañana? Talisman for sorrow,
Not for love;
Love may die before to-morrow.

And when 'tis dead we may deride it—
Who shall know?—
Laugh when we should weep beside it.

Mañana? No. Ahora; cherished,
Lotus-breathed,
Lived, before 'tis past and perished.

THE LIFE OF YESTERDAY.

What is the use of the toil and striving
And what will matter the tear and smile,
The well laid plan and the deep contriving,
When lost in the dusk of the after-while?

Why fret the flesh with an unhealed sorrow?
The world wants laughter, it shares no grief,
Why slight to-day for a vague to-morrow
That shadows all hope for the soul's relief?

Sweet were the faith to believe and cherish
This life a spark strayed from parent flame,
To hold no fear that its light will perish—
Instead of the darkness, the unknown name.

Saddest of all is to know, at parting,
The grief is mine, that the world holds none,
To know the blush of the dawn's faint starting
Will shed its red glory on all—save one.

If there be friend who shall mourn my going,
Though grieved my loss in a single breath,
'Twill send a thrill through my poor clay glowing
And out of the grave snatch the chill of death.

THE NEW YEAR BELL.

Within the music of the New Year Bell,
I hear a note of triumph rise and swell;
I hear its rhythmic harmony repeat
The laughter of a maiden true and sweet;
Attending close upon the vibrant air
Comes quivering discord of a past despair;
Then, lightly leaping from its metal throat,
The arbitrary schoolboy's careless note;
With trembling pathos, an adagio slow,
Deep-voiced and solemn, tells a mother's woe.
The chimes ring soft, in ecstasy divine,
I feel a baby's fingers close in mine;
Then, sweet and clear a cadence speeds along
That brings to mind a singer—and a song.
I hide my foolish tears as memories swell
In true accord with music of the bell.

LOVE'S REIGN.

Poor, halting thing that creeps a little way
Low-bowed beneath its burden of neglect;
It clasps the broken hopes of yesterday
And trails dead flowers with which its form was
 decked.

Tear-marked the face that lifts with pleading eyes,
The lips beg tol'rance of their latest breath;
Impatiently we bear reproachful sighs
And chafe beneath its sickening and its death.

Dry-eyed we look, at last, on pallid lip,
Relieved, yet half ashamed that pulses sing,
And while the new-crushed vintages we sip
Cry out, "The King is dead; long live the King."

WITH NATURE.

O, give me the breath of the ocean foam
Ere the force of the storm be spent ;
O, give me the width of the world to roam,
The halt for the night as my only home,
With my way forever the path apart
From the haunts mapped out on the toiler's chart.
To me from the silence is ever lent
Companionship, when I spread my tent
In the calm of the desert's heart.

O, give me the shades of the morning sky
That reburnish the slopes and rills,
O, give me the tints where the shadows lie
Soft-rocked in the sway of the zephyr's sigh
And I'll crave no boon from the artist's hand
Though his kindling fame by the world be fanned.
The glow of the dawn that the heaven fills,
The quiv'ring light on the sleeping hills
Are the things that I understand.

THE POLE-SEEKERS.

From east to north, as the petrels fly,
A snow-squall whips through a frozen sky,
Beneath the swirl of its widening track
The sea curls up like a dolphin's back,
'Twixt lift and fall of the seething gale
White shines the sheet of a ghostly sail.

O'er sodden decks in a chilling flood
Sharp bites the tooth of the flying scud,
The crew stands firm though the plowing keel
Brooks no restraint from the steering-wheel;
Each man so still that the driving sleet
Enwraps his form like a winding-sheet.

The vessel swerves with a dip and start
And sets its course by the captain's chart,
If mate and crew mark the swift advance
They give no sign by word or glance.

From rolling seas to a widening slough
The ship drives on with her silent crew.

The storm is ceased and the sun-dogs show
In purpling lights o'er the crusted snow ;
The wind that whipped through this land of death
'Twould seem had blown with a Lethean breath,
For if hours have passed, or if days have sped,
No soul on board could have truly said.

Ethereal blue at the bow and stern
That spreads o'erhead an inverted urn,
And in the rim of its arching bowl
The mystic swing of the heavens roll.
The needle swerves in a circling ring
And the world is hushed while the planets sing.

The captain bends o'er his chart and book
Nor heeds the scene by a transient look.
Arouse thee, man, for thy work is done,
The bar is past and the goal is won!
But he makes no sign if his dull eyes see,
He is done with earth and its mockery.

* * * * *

The ship sweeps on through the wind-tossed sea,
Through the ice-packed, shoal-ringed, threatening
 sea,

Till the gray waves break on a storm-worn beach
And the silence hears but the sea-mew's screech,
But the sea-mew's screech and the fur-seal's bark,
And it founders there in the angry dark.

The pole-star shines with a murky light,
Like an astral sun, with a frozen light;
O'er the glacier beds and the ice-flow's spire
The auroras flash in a fan of fire,
And they mock the forms of the corpses stark
On the ship that died in the outer dark.

The frost hangs thick on the stove-in hull,
On the snow-sheathed, wave-pressed, battered hull,
And the tide bears hard on the weakened beams
Till it saps the strength of the hemp-calked seams,
Till it sweeps away every telltale mark,
Lest a prey be lost to the unknown dark.

WHEN CHRIST IS RISEN.

A mystic joy sweeps o'er the drooping world
Where yesterday a pall of sorrow swirled
Its solemn length from vale to brow of hill;
Each tiny atom sings with quickening thrill
And Nature cries with one according breath,
"All hail, 'tis Jesus, King, of Nazereth!"
But man still questions. Fearful lest his eyes,
Schooled in deceit, deceive himself, he cries,
"The proof?" In answer, lo, the bleeding hands.
What creeping life so pitiful as man's?
The word was given him for a higher goal
Else this last shame had forfeited his soul.

THE STAR.

The night shut in with black and threatening
frown

When o'er my troubled world the sun went down,
Forebodings marked the time with vague distress
That bound me prisoner to hopelessness,
And darkness seemed more fearful to my sight
From having known the glory of the light.

The hours dragged on; I raised my drooping
head

But not in hope, I knew the sun was dead,
And planned no life beyond the black expanse
When, lo, I saw a wondrous light advance
That glowed and grew until it filled the skies.
I stood and gazed with yearning, doubting eyes.

No more does hope's hurt wing trail idly down,
No more does night shut in with threatening
frown,

I grieve no more because the sun is gone,
Hold no regret for yesterday's lost dawn,
But bless the salient gloom that reached afar,
For else how had I ever found the star?

THE INEVITABLE.

Christ is born to-day. Sad heart
Look up, and hope.
Those who kneel and still their cries
Do not know that in His eyes
Shadow of a cross there lies.

Love is born to-day. My heart
Look up, and hope.
Sweet content is all about;
But the life blood will drip out,
Some day, on a cross of doubt.

TO ETHEL.

The heart's emotion finds no way to speak
So poor is man in gifts, in words so weak,
And gratitude within the throbbing breast
Must ever rest there only half expressed.

Unskilled I stand to cope with what I feel
So strange this element new joys reveal,
My heart though not unknown to lighter mood
Is all unused to this of gratitude.

In other moments I have found the word
Through which to make some deep emotion heard,
Now falt'ring tongue lacks power to overcome
Its own incompetence, and so lies dumb.

Not from ungratefulness, although I claim
No more of sentiment than others name.
From lack of rivulets to feed the spring
Its waters long have ceased to purl and sing.

But now it gushes out in force anew ;
That this is so, I render thanks to you.
One sweet, good woman down my path has trod
To make this barren earth seem nearer God.

DESECRATION.

Ferret them out—ferret them out,
Label the plunder and hawk it about,
Dip grasping fingers deep into the dark,
Draw from its cover each skeleton stark,
Secrets, and papers, and letters, long penned,
The dead would have given his blood to defend;
No incident leave to the mercy of doubt,
Ferret them out—ferret them out.

This is the work for the daughter, the wife,
Friend that the dead man has trusted in life,
Each holds some mem'ry of weakness confessed,
Confidence given when heart was distressed;
These trundle out for the crowd's curious eyes,
If sacred the trust, then the greater the prize,
Rest not in your effort till you have unfurled
All that the dead has kept close from the world.

Here is a page where his soul was laid bare,
Every word wild with a heart's great despair,
Panned here are thoughts that were never revealed
While he had life and his lips were unsealed;
Locked in the grave, lacking power to protest,
Quick-seized is the prize and for barter is dressed.
Ye merciless Vandals with talons of greed
Drag out his heart that the vultures may feed.

ON THE TAMALPAIS SLOPE.

There's an amber light a-quiver on the eucalyptus
trees,

There's a splash of fiery crimson tints the wood,
And the tiny brook speaks softly to the perfume-
laden breeze

That replies as though it plainly understood.

From beneath the leaf strewn brush-pile there is
seen a wary nose

Peeping out in nervous caution and affright
Ere its owner ventures yonder to a spot where
breakfast grows

With the dew left fresh upon it by the night.

As a touch of quiet sadness marks the song the
martin sings

Near the old nest, long deserted in the glen,
So do hearts imbued with sorrow ever turn where
mem'ry clings

And in fancy live their happiness again.

There's a power that turns us ever to'ard the helpful
light of hope

Though the chiefest of our projects totter down,
And my guiding star is yonder on the Tamalpais
slope

When I sink beneath the tumult of the town.

HIS ANSWER.

Do I love you? I do, if distrust can be love ;
If the fear that I feel when I press your warm hand
That you'd grant the same favor to some other man
Were the time but auspicious, and I out of sight ;
If the certainty, here, in my heart, that your glance
Will caress me then turn to some other, perchance
Who has merited less what I deem as my right ;
If the madness that throbs when I feel your embrace,
And despair that o'erpowers when I look in your
face,
Irresponsible, weak, vacillating, untrue—
If a certain contempt that steals into my breast
When the overwrought senses are stilled and at
rest
Can be love, then, I answer you, yes, that I do.

THE GOLDEN GATE.

The sun sinks low and the hour grows late,
The clouds drift in through the Golden Gate;
The sea-gulls dip with a whirl and cry,
They scan the earth and they scan the sky,
They dart and whirl with a restless wing,
Nor trust the song that the breakers sing;
They know the purr of the mighty sea
Presages acts of its treachery;
Beneath the droning so soft and low
They feel the breath of the tempest blow.

A mother prayed till the hour grew late,
"Bring my boy safe home through the Golden
Gate."

A troubled ship on the wave is seen,
Her sails are bright with a silvery sheen,
She plows her way through the salty deep,
While mighty waves o'er her bulwarks leap;

The tempest's finger points out her course,
She swerves and follows with fateful force;
She trembles, hesitates, rushes, dips,
Her white-faced crew with their salt-washed lips
Nor fear nor care for the wind-swept sea,
They sleep the sleep of eternity.

A mother prayed till the hour grew late—
And her boy went Home, through the Golden
Gate.

IN MISSION DOLORES CHURCHYARD.

What do they dream of down in their beds
 Lowly and still,
 With the echoless sound of the languorous rill
Tinkling in cadences liquid and soft
Through the night at their feet and the night at
 their heads?
Deep in the dusk of this silent spot
What is remembered and what forgot?

What do they hold of hope and regret,
 Laughter and pain—
 Is there naught to disturb but the drip of the rain
Stealing to cheeks that lie pallid and chill?
What of memory clings where the soul would forget?
Silent the lips where a song was heard,
Silence where once spoke a deathless word.

This one who lies here, think you he knows
Day is above?

From the cypress near by come the notes of a
dove

Telling his passion full-plaintive and sweet;
Kind were the song if the poor clay glows
Thrilling again to a love once known
Ere the dark moss o'er the heart had grown.

Linger awhile and fellowship keep

Him who is lone;

Here no trace of a flower or the mark of a stone
Ventures dispute with the tangle of briars
That speak hoarse in the wind of the one that lies
deep,

Wrapt in the dusk of this tranquil spot
Haply forgetting, and long forgot.

THE MAN AND WOMAN OF IT.

"My vase is broken," she trembling said ;
The tears fell fast and she drooped her head
"With tender touch I will mend it true,
And make believe it's as good as new."

"My vase is broken," he calmly said ;
"But I'll buy another one instead ;
One just as pretty and just as good,
And put it there where the old one stood."

WILL YOU RECALL ME.

How will it be
After the infinite pain of the parting,
The tears and the sorrow?
After we've crushed each regret at its starting,
After the night of the old day's departing
When dawns the tomorrow,
How will the world look to you and to me?
How will it be?

Will we forget
Things we have loved and from which we must
 sever,
Small objects of treasure,
Dingy, dear books we have coned well together:
Trifles of love we have kept through all weather
That happiness measure;
Things over which love and labor have met,
Will we forget?

When all is done,
When our hearts, quickened by stress of their
 aching,
Prompt lips to dissemble,
Teaching them smiles, while beneath hearts are
 breaking,
Making them prate of the new dawn's awaking—
Then, dear, should I tremble,
Will you recall me, when hope I have none,
When all is done?

APOTHEGMS FOR THE IDLE.

What were the summer, stripped of all its bloom?
What were the world, denying idlers room?
The serious faces of the spinners left
Affrighting one another in the gloom.

Who finds his work in life where pleasure lies,
Who feasts, though he at last of famine dies,
Can say that he has lived though he may hold
No fleeting bauble that the frugal prize.

Utility and beauty seldom mate,
And he who turns the idle from his gate
Perchance but cuts the lily from its stem
To leave his garden bare and desolate.

When indolence would plead its own defense
Turn not away in pride of eminence;

The drone and worker find the common goal
And lie in lengths of equal consequence.

Withhold the condemnation that would fling
The cloak of silence o'er the hearts that sing,
The word of cheer, though voiced by careless lips,
Is ever to be held a priceless thing.

THE MISER'S SONG.

My heart is old, is old, is old,
Its warmth went out with a dream untold,
The blood drips slow through each mangled fold—
I heal the hurt with the balm of gold,
Of gold, of gold.

My heart is old, is old, is old,
Is hard and withered, and dead and cold ;
Where once the blood of my pulses rolled
Now surges greed for the yellow gold.
For gold, for gold.

My heart is old, is old, is old,
And dark and heavy as churchyard mold ;
For I, like Judas, have smiled, and sold
My friend, and God, for a piece of gold,
Of gold, of gold.

LIFE.

I saw a rose in a garden fair,
A scarlet rose, that I longed to wear ;
I begged that Fate would generous be
And give the beautiful rose to me.
She shook her head in assumed regret
And answered, softly, "Not yet, not yet."
The rose's petals beneath the sun
Unfolded, tenderly, one by one,
Its rarest leaves were at last unfurled
And shed their glory upon the world ;
I asked again, but again I met
The same denial, "Not yet, not yet."
One day, the color began to fade,
The scarlet turned to a deeper shade,
The petals fluttered upon the air—
Its life was over, the stem lay bare.
All through my life I have known the pain,
The harsh derision of this refrain,
This mournful dirge of a life's regret,
This mocking echo, "Not yet, not yet."

FINIS.

Around was the evening's twilight glow,
He softly whispered, "I love you so,"
Lip pressed to lip in warm caress,
Two hearts aglow with happiness.

Over the hill in a churchyard gray
The grass grows rank in a wanton way,
The water oozes, trickles and glides,
'Round the husband's bed the earth-worm
hides,
The dank mold quivers on lip and chin,
The worms creep out and the worms creep in.

The bells ring out on the sunlit air,
The bride is young and the bride is fair,
The world is throbbing with love and life
The bridegroom hastens to kiss his wife—
An ashen pallor o'erspreads her face,
The dead man stands in her lover's place.

The vision is gone—she breathes again,
The minister says, "Till death, Amen."
The dead goes back to the dead once more
As far, as close, as he was before,
And holds his vigil all grim and drear
Till her conscience cries, "Appear, appear."

In a cozy room all warm and bright,
A cheerful sight on a winter's night,
A whispering low, "Alone, at last,"
Is caught and whirled on the icy blast—
"Alone, alone," it whistles and moans
And scurries away to the graveyard stones;
It snaps the twigs with its chilling breath
And dances the frantic dance of death;
"Alone, alone," it hisses and shrieks—
The green slime freezes on lips and cheeks,
Through the clustering curls, the mouth's wide
 grin,
The worms creep out and the worms creep in.

LOVE'S ABERRATION.

She stands beside you but in spirit kneels
And worships at your feet such love she feels;
Her melting heart grows faint beneath its bliss
And glorifies its weakness through a kiss.
She smiles, and you from your exalted place,
Bend down to share the heaven in her face.

What subtle change is this you now behold?
What listless form your coaxing arms enfold?
You chide that she is heedless of your sigh
And meets your glance with cold and vacant eye.
What have you done? O, nothing much amiss,
You've called her Kate, that's all, while she's
Liliss.

GROPING.

The page of yesterday—how strange the way
In which its lines were filled,
How changed the import of the deeds we willed
Seen through the consequences of to-day.

The stone that rests upon the mountain-slope
Is harmless in its bed ;
A word is but a word until 'tis said,
Then 'tis the avalanche that buries hope.

We turn the thumb-marked leaf; our cares and
strife
That have so sore distressed
We try to bury in a contrite breast
And seek to write a cleaner page for life.

But, somehow, when 'tis done and conscience wakes
To run the items o'er,
We find the same temptations as before,
The same backslidings and the old mistakes.

THE GALLEY-SLAVE.

To work ; to weep ; to struggle ; to endure ;
To look through tears upon a life's mistake ;
To feel forbidden pleasures tempt and lure ;
To loathe the ties 'twere indiscreet to break ;
To gaze upon the coffin'd corpse of love
With dry, hard eyes ; to drain the cup of gall ;
No help below, no hope from heaven above,
Just vacancy and numbness over all ;
To have, to hold, to tire, and then, to hate ;
To burn the heart out longing to be free ;
This makes up life for that sad child of Fate
Who mourns beside a cold, dead ecstasy.

BARRIERS.

Shadow thou art ; a dream of my heart
Forever beyond me.
I may not press you
Close to my breast ; may not love and caress you.
The passionate glow
Lighting your eyes 'gainst your reason and will
Sent through my being an answering thrill,
Transient and swift
As light through a rift ;
Not until then could we measure the cost—
Eden forbidden, elysium lost.

TO THE OLD YEAR.

How privileged are you, Old Year,
Behold, when life is through,
You change the reading of your name
And issue forth anew.

The follies left within the past,
Mistakes that you deplore,
Are dead within their hidden graves,
And visited no more.

You snatch the rose from pleasure's bush
Forgetting where it grew ;
You keep no cup when it is drained—
Ah, how I envy you.

New life comes swift on pealing chimes
With smiles of kindly fate,
Lo, through the holly's mystic fire
You are regenerate.

I would that I might leave, like you,
 This body, weak with age,
And as a child begin again
 Upon an unsoiled page.

A CHILD OF NATURE.

On the mountain's crest,
Where the eagles nest,
 I recline at ease,
And my lips are kissed
By the passing mist
 And the wanton breeze.

Unrestrained I laugh
As a draught I quaff
 From a rippling stream,
And I feel the thrill
Of unbridled will
 Like a sweet, wild dream.

In the town off there
In the sultry air
 Are the fools at work,
And I drink their health
In the torrent's wealth
 With a quip and quirk.

LIFE'S MIRAGE.

Within my bruised heart the night of life
Let down the sombre curtain of the past
Dull-led with despair;
Within the gray and ambient gloom
Sat sullen sorrow;
The blackest hour had come when, lo, a light
Illumined all the barren, arid waste
And Hope stood trembling there.
I dared not trust; I dared not lift my head;
In awe, I whispered, "What art thou?"
.....She said,
"I am the everlasting dawn
Of life's to-morrow."

IN THE SHADY PLACES.

In the shady places,
That the hand of man has not yet polluted
Where the right of way still lies undisputed
With the speaking wild,
I have listened long to the distant reapers
As their cries come faint through the flow'ring
 creepers ;
In the shady places.

In the shady places
I at times have knelt in my soul's disquiet
With my blood aflame in tumultuous riot
O'er a stinging wrong ;
And the silence, keen to the grief I smother.
Calms my deep distress like a tender mother :
In the shady places.

In the shady places
Where the fragrance, faint, from the moist earth
 rises

And the winding path hides its glad surprises
Like a sportive child,
There I turn my steps when the world oppresses
And I find the balm for my heart-distresses ;
In the shady places.

"THE POETIC CHOIR."

They, jointly in the critic's comment share,
Co-working lest oblivion swallow all,
And stand together 'neath the wondering sun
Like severed fractions that are brought to bear
In entities uniting to make one.

"Thus," each has dreamed; and, "thus," the dream
 was done,
And, "thus," each praise to Eros has outpoured;
The theme is clear, although the text be dense,
And needs no foot-notes where the burdens run,
Unless annexed to palliate offense.

Poor Muse! When will a song transcendent rise
To drown the carping travesties long borne,
That shall with beauty hold the listener dumb
And waft the winged word that never dies?
When will a Moses to thy bondage come?

LEST WE GROW TOO CONTENT.

Lest we grow too content,
Lest the joys of the world make the pain of re-
gretting
To leave it too keen, we have sorrows that, fretting
Our souls with their cankerous gnawing, are given
Lest we grow too content.

As the pendulum swings
So our lives, ever pendent 'twixt laughter and
sorrow,
Today swing in light and in darkness tomorrow;
The tears or the joys may be cut with the stroke
As the pendulum swings.

UNCERTAINTY.

Where will you be ; in the midst of the throng
Close to the path that I travel along,
Or aside in the quiet
Shunning the echo of laughter and song?

How shall I know you ; by softly breathed word,
Thrilling the depths of the heart that has heard,
Or by some subtle power
Potent as hope held in longings deferred?

When we have met shall we bury these years,
Dead 'neath the flood of our penitent tears,
And by tacit consenting
Stifle the pain of our doubts and our fears?

Where I now wander perhaps you abide ;
Or, you perhaps may have passed at my side
And have called in your passing ;
You may have called, and I may have denied.

FALLACIES.

We do the thing most foreign to our will,
We rise in grief, and lay us down in pain,
We crave the joy from which we must abstain
And crush desires that would our being thrill;
With fate we combat in unequal strife
And call it life.

We build a heaven where peace invites the soul;
And earthly dreams long merged in shad'wy wraith,
Gain substance in proportion to our faith
As, sanguine, we approach the final goal
To greet each ardent hope with bated breath,
And call it death.

REGENERATION.

I know not when it died, this love of mine,
Its life slipped out so quietly at last
When all its fevered suffering was past
And fate, full gently, cut the fretted thread.
My grief was hushed as though by touch divine,
And I could scarce believe that love was dead.

Such pain it has endured and yet lived on!
It seemed that censure from unbridled will,
Full with contempt, had lost the power to kill
So long the pulse-throb beat with steady stroke.
New crosses crushed the heart that tried anon
To lift the weight and, in the effort, broke.

Now love is dead what shall we do, my heart;
Kneel down within the shadow of our grief
And beg of heaven encompassing relief?
Thus be it then—our joy was dearly bought.
From this dead life we'll let a new life start,
Grown wiser by the lesson we are taught.

HERE, AND THERE.

To be over yonder where fresh from the grasses
The fragrance blows softly o'er dew-laden hills,
To catch the quick word of the wind as it passes
And hear the low answer from murmuring rills,
To feel the salt kiss of the neighboring ocean,
To thrill to each pleasure that Nature can give,
Ah, this is the acme of human emotion,
Ah, this is to live.

To know that the herald of day is o'erflushing
The meadows that wake to the glow in the east,
That every soft cloud in the heaven is blushing
Like cheeks of a maid from a lover releast,
To cage up the heart in a smoke-begirt city
And strive, ever vainly, to stifle its cry,
Ah, this is misfortune deserving of pity,
Ah, this is to die.

WHERE ALL IS VANITY.

How smiles the world where yesterday it frowned
And spurned with disapproval ways and means
By which we sought to have our efforts crowned.

How smiles the world when we have found success,
How servilely it seeks the master-hand
When it has lost the grime of weariness.

When heights are gained, when over tortuous ways
Yet trails the smoke of hourly sacrifice,
How trite seem plaudits and how empty praise.

What voice that now approves but had assailed
And cried its condemnation to the skies
If chance had so decreed and we had failed?

Where lies the joy to know, should fortune frown,
That these who are the loudest in our praise
Will be the first to rend and pull us down?

Thrice blessed he, who, in some lonely spot
Apart from ways and mockeries of men,
Forgets the world and is, by it, forgot.

A SPECTATOR.

Recalling all the sad, unfruitful years,
The hopes long faded and the joys long dead,
And pausing where the ghost of mem'ry leers
I drink again the gall of useless tears.

An empty life, as rayless as that doom
Which dogs the unbeliever to the grave,
Or like those flowers that droop within the gloom
To powdered dust on some neglected tomb!

One said to me: "My life has been as thine,
"All aims were thwarted, motives misconstrued,
"The cup held poison where I thought was wine;
"I gathered stones where gems had seemed to shine

"And had despaired, but voices seemed to say
" 'The way of thy salvation lies in this,
" 'Take up thy cross, and so, from day to day,
" 'Become more worthy of the higher way.' "

Thus each man has his concepts to defend,
Each, groping, wraps about him some belief;
On life we each a serious int'rest bend
All fearful yet all hopeful for the end.

THE ELUSIVE.

I am that hope held sacred at the start
Of love's desire ;
I am that dream that fades, when dies
Its smoldering fire.

I am that sweet, evasive music heard
Above the theme :
I am the soul, intangible,
Of things that seem.

I am that subtle longing most of all
Misunderstood ;
That joy men seek to hold within
A jess and hood.

Some bubble ever floats beyond the hand,
For which man sighs ;
Some ignis fatuus ever lures,
For which he dies.

Illusion all. No heart, that knows the full
Of love most prized,
But still, close-hidden, holds some dream
Unrealized.

WITH LOVE AT YOUR SIDE.

With love at your side,
You steer your small craft 'gainst a pitiless tide,
You brave every channel destructive and deep,
And laugh as the breakers in impotence leap
And baffled, fall back. You can safely deride
All impudent evil with love at your side.

With love at your side,
The darkest and narrowest pathway seems wide ;
The sober old earth and the gray sky above
Is warmed, and kept bright, by the sunshine of love.
No effort seems fruitless, no joy seems denied
Who travels the world and has love at his side.

WOMAN'S DESTINY.

Man's heart's a vase and woman is the flower
That sheds a fragrance through the passing hour;
She sees love turn to duty, illy done,
Herself no longer wooed now she is won—
And destiny, in sullen mood, at last
Conspire to write her name within the past.

When youth and maid set out upon their way,
Their faces turned toward the dawning day
Of new born love, she striving to forget
That o'er another's heart their lips have met—
Some woman who, perchance, has heard his vow
With soul as full of trust as hers is now—
She stills the errant thought within her breast
And seeks to stifle doubts but half confessed.

When dawn no longer holds the tint of rose
And morning into noon of passion grows,

She muses on the times when he has kept
 Love's light alive in hearts now dead, unwept,
 And fearful lest she reach this common goal
 Close scans his face in bitterness of soul,
 Till in his glance morose, disconsolate,
 She reads the first prognostic of her fate.

Poor, helpless woman, born to be undone,
 Butt of all evil, recognizing none;
 Men censure her for weakness out of hand
 Condemning in her that they most demand,
 Perforce she must pretend the thing she's not
 Until her soul rebels against her lot;
 She calls, but lo, the gulf of sex is wide,
 And she, a helpless bark upon its tide.

Like restless beetles, on a summer's night,
 Turned from their pastimes by a fatal light,
 Are women, battering their better sense
 Against established laws of precedents;
 Though they succeed and gain the thing they will
 What profit it? they're slaves to Nature still;
 Their lot will be as it has ever been,
 To trust, to be deceived, to trust again.

YOU WHO LOVE ME.

You who love me, let me know it,
Let your smiles and hand-clasps show it,
Be not meager in your giving,
Kindness makes our lives worth living,
Youth is sweet and old age mellow
Cheered by words of some good fellow.

Wait not till the grave has bound me
Ere you place your gifts around me,
Little will I reckon of weeping
When chill death is vigil keeping;
So, while skies are bright above me,
Here's to those who show they love me.

EARTH-LOVE.

'Tis not the saddest thing
That we must one day lay the volume down,
Its page unfinished and its aim unguessed;
The saddest thing is not Fate's sudden frown,
And not the loss of something that has blessed;
'Tis not the leaving of some love long known,
Nor yet the dreams that have familiar grown
And not within the grave is held the sting,
But in the thought that this fair earth will lie
Tomorrow and tomorrow 'neath the sky,
As fair as now, indifferent to our loss.
Sore need have we of faith to bear such cross.
That ways well loved shall smile for us no more
And yet remain in beauty as before—
This were the saddest thing.

A DAY DREAM.

Over yonder near the shore-line there's a
 sea-gull slowly flying,
Drifting gently on the bosom of the land
 breeze from the hills,
And he steepes within its fragrance all his
 senses, none denying,
Till his brain is strangely heavy and his
 bosom sweetly thrills.

Over yonder near the shore-line I, in fancy,
 see the luster
Of the ardent sunshine streaming on the
 hills serene, and brown,
And my vagrant heart is resting where the
 redwoods thickly cluster,
While my body lingers, helpless, in the
 smoke-encircled town.

I've a fervid, wanton longing for a spot I
know out yonder,
'Tis a little sun-kissed picture that I paint
when world-oppressed,
And I dream that I through fragrance of a
phantom garden wander
Where, in fancy, I've a cabin and, in fancy,
am at rest.

QUATRAINS.

Live not within the past; compute the cost
Then burn, without regret, the bridges crossed.
Sweet yesterday! A diamond past all price
That slipped from out its setting and is lost.

What one had plucked the rose if he had seen
The thorns concealed beneath its tender green?
What tears were saved if forecast could be made—
Tears would be saved, but lost the joys between.

Hold no regret; what has been done, is done,
Nor all the waters that to oceans run
Shall blot the folly from a single act
O'erfraught with consequences we would shun.

Quench not the flame because you feel the fire;
Fear not to voice in prayer to-day's desire
Because the answered prayer of yesterday
Exposed the dross to which you would aspire.

Be not too proud in virtue yet untried,
 Chance may discover flaws that good deeds hide,
 And many a prude a wanton's heart has housed
 Yet lived in virtue and in virtue died.

Before great Midas men as slaves kneel down
 To cry him perfect; but, let fortune frown
 Lo, all turn scoffers where they lately praised
 And see but ass's ears upon a clown.

How prized is gift of wit with which to lead
 And foresight to discern the prurient need;
 But prestige oft sits throned on emptiness.
 The way of conquest is where vultures feed.

Lift one above the welter of the sty,
 Drag one to dross of earth from out the sky,
 Each still himself remains through change of time
 Proclaimed by earmarks ye shall know him by.

Who thinks that wealth lies in the vein of gold,
 And power within the royal ermine's fold,
 A child is who has heard the mother's voice
 But missed the meaning of the story told.

QUATRAINS.

Think not to shirk the problems writ of fate,
Apportioned labors lengthen by debate,
Heaven tolerates no sluggard who has held
The lesson of his life too intricate.

WITH YOU TO SHOW THE WAY.

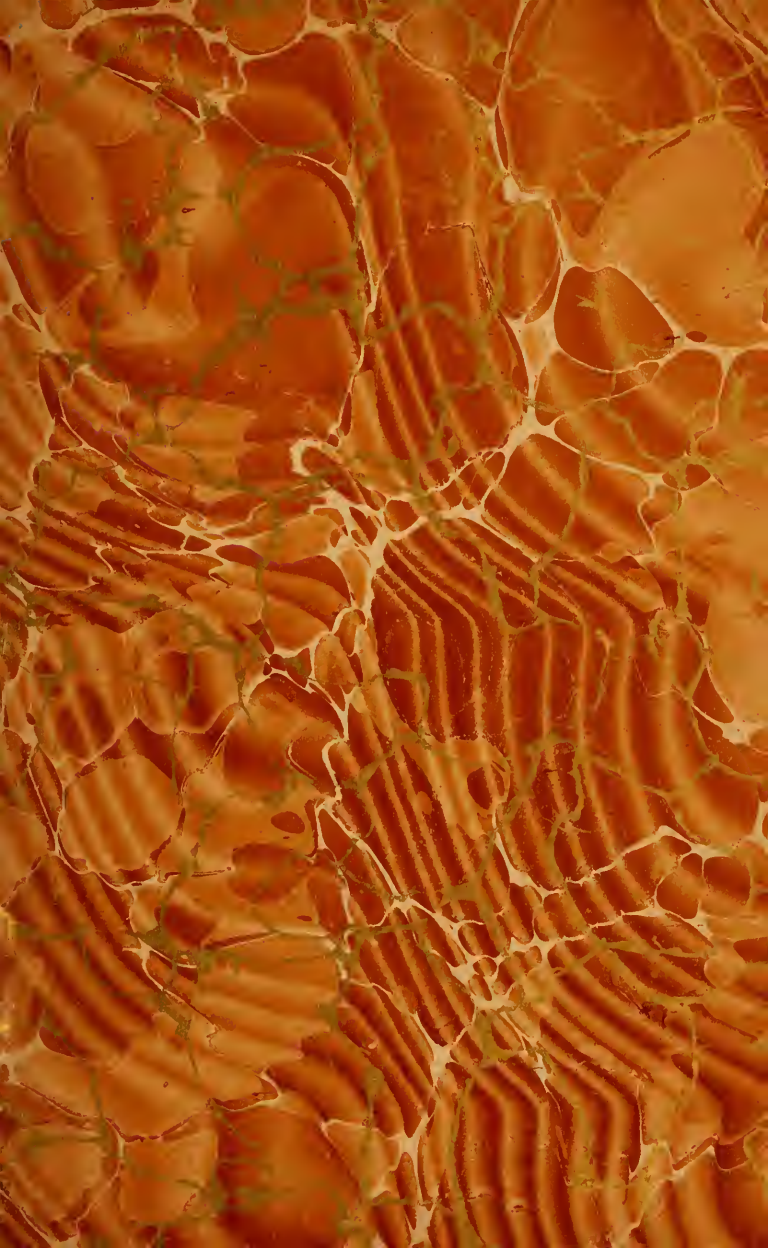
With you to show the way,
To break the path and make it clear of thorns,
To help bewildered reason to the light,
To set, and guide, poor blundering feet aright,
With you as pilot, over any sea
Not known before, the course would easy be ;
The world seems filled with naught but what adorns,
With you to show the way.

With you to show the way
How helpless and dependent have I grown ;
I fear to venture lest I stray afar
And, wandering back to paths where sorrows are,
Again be lost within their Stygian gloom.
What weave the Fates upon their shadowy loom ?
Must I, in some dread hour, walk on alone,
With none to show the way ?

How, then, will seem the way?
The flowers will all be dead, the birds all dumb;
The well-loved paths, close-hidden from the throng,
Will all repeat my dead heart's funeral song.
I could not bear to look on things once shared—
One may not go and leave the other spared,
So, tarry but a little till I come
And show me, still, the way.

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